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A
CONCISE VIEW
OF THAT
CLASS OF PROPHECY
WHICH RELATES TO
THE MESSIAH.

✓
A

CONCISE VIEW
OF THAT
CLASS OF PROPHECY
WHICH RELATES TO
THE MESSIAH,
CONNECTED WITH THE LEADING DOCTRINES OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY
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BRAZENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy. *Rev. xix. 10.*

A Christian is the highest style of man !
And is there who the cross wipes off,
As a foul blot from his dishonour'd brow ?
If angels tremble—'tis at such a sight. YOUNG.

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1832.

So.



PREFACE.

Two methods have been found most useful in the art of communicating knowledge. One is, to take a single question of a subject, and to examine it in its several bearings, applying a microscope, as it were, to all its intricacies of machinery. The other has been denominated the *suggestive style*: i. e. where a subject is treated in such a manner as to put a clue into the reader's hand, and to suggest that *train of thought* which may carry him on to study the minute details of it for himself.

Without discussing the comparative merits of either of these vehicles for communicating ideas, the Author of this little Work has only to observe, that the comprehensive nature

of the following subject has compelled him to choose the latter: especially as it appeared the only way (unless he had written a cramped detail or mere analysis of several Theological works) to compress within a small compass a body of divinity which might perchance invite the attention of the ordinary reader. Accordingly, it has been his aim, throughout this concise view of Prophecy, to suggest to the mind of the *unlearned* Student, the same train of ideas which led the Author to embrace the subject closer himself, and consequently to consult some of the most valuable treatises of the orthodox Church.

So far the Author has thought it right to apologize for the *style* of the few following pages. As to the *substance* of them, his object has been to take a steady and connected view of that class of Prophecy which na-

turally comprises the leading doctrines of the Christian faith. For instance, it would be impossible to shew the fulfilment of Prophecy in respect of the Messiah being a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, without interweaving the internal evidences of Christianity. Some peculiar points, also, especially upon Jewish errors, are more fully illustrated, and various critical opinions on certain doctrines hinted at, whilst others, more important, are broadly laid down. There is only one material circumstance to add: that many suggestions of intrinsic value, delivered from the University pulpit, which have not yet been published, but which the Author had the good fortune to hear, are incorporated either with the text or the notes. And accordingly, it is obvious, that many *beaten tracks* must have been followed, more particularly in an at-

tempt to extract, arrange, and bring into a small shape, the substance of many voluminous comments. Gold, however, will bear to be *well beaten*, and “ tried seven times in the fire ;” since it is possible, without impairing its beauty, to add perhaps to its solidity.

ANALYSIS.

Two modes of viewing the strength of the argument, the separate and the collective mode; both apply as criteria to prove the inspiration and accomplishment of Prophecy. Foreknowledge not from metaphysical calculations between cause and effect, much less from moral probabilities. Free-agency of man, as connected with the foreknowledge of God, not a branch of the present subject, nor opinions as to the nature and extent of inspiration. Application of the above principles to those Prophecies which relate to the Messiah. Answer to objections on the ground of obscurity in some Prophecies. The clearest Prophecies therefore to be considered first. Isaiah ix. 6, the clearest Prophecy of the Messiah in two points. Predictions of Jacob and Daniel as to the TIME of the Advent. National signs. Isaiah's Prophecy of a golden age. Personal signs. The second Elijah. Local Prophecy by Micah. Wilful mistake of the

Jews as to our Saviour's birth-place—also as regarded his two-fold origin. Connected view of Prophecy, as one determinate promise of God to Adam, Seth, Shem, Abraham, Jacob, and Judah. Distinction between an unconditional promise and a conditional covenant. Use and necessity of predicting the external condition and personal character of the Messiah. Zechariah's Prophecy of the Messiah's entry into Jerusalem. External humility of Christ a prominent feature of Prophecy. Isaiah's fifty-third chapter an historical painting. Prophetic nature of the Psalms. Twofold sense of prophecy. The twenty-second Psalm a prophetic dirge for the Saviour upon the cross. Jewish disbelief of the resurrection. Prediction of the Ascension the clearest part of the sixty-eighth Psalm. Personal character of the Messiah foretold by Moses. Parallel and contrast between Moses the type, and Christ the Antitype. Outline of Christ's character as a prophet, a priest, and a king. Our Saviour's miracles of power and of knowledge. Transfiguration. Doctrine of resurrection unripe for early revelation, yet hinted at by the cases of Enoch, Elijah, and Elisha, but fully brought to light by Christ. Ser-

mon on the mount. Parables. Jesus unfolded deeper mysteries than Moses, and became the perfect substitute for the imperfection of the ceremonial law. Peculiar nature of Christ's priesthood. Perfection of our Lord's private life the completion of Prophecy. Spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom a grand feature of Prophecy. Connection of Prophecy with the other evidences of the Christian faith. Practical result of the argument from Prophecy. Direct reference of its effects to each individual. Gratitude and love the immediate result on the heart of the true believer; also fear as well as hope, because the Messiah foretold as a judge. How fear and hope ought to operate—viz. as strong in things not seen as in things seen. Imaginary case of one looking into futurity to illustrate the strength of a Christian's faith in Prophecy. True faith working by love excites hope rather than fear. Christian view of Prophecy. Active and contemplative happiness. Energetic effects of dwelling on the mystery of the Cross.

A
CONCISE VIEW
OF THAT
CLASS OF PROPHECY
WHICH RELATES TO
THE MESSIAH.

THE strength of the argument derived from Prophecy, in evidence of the Christian faith, may be measured according to two different standards: one consists in the *separate* consideration of a single Prophecy, the other, in viewing *collectively* a certain number of Prophecies taken in connection with each other. It appears perhaps the most direct and perspicuous mode, to select the clearest and strongest case of a detached Prophecy, (according to Paley's method,) and to

Two modes of viewing the nature of the argument.

examine in detail not only the probable weight of each circumstance by itself, but the aggregate sum of probabilities resulting from a combination of the whole.

The
separate
mode.

In conformity with this plan, the united strength of these separate forces, all concentrating, like rays of light, in one focus, must necessarily carry a degree of conviction to the mind equal to the highest pitch of moral certainty. And the argument would hold equally strong, if each circumstance, viewed alone, amounted only to the lowest presumption. But the evidence becomes tenfold stronger, if one or more of those independent circumstances, which form the body of proof, are of such a nature, that they must be *conditions* absolutely essential to the subject in contemplation. For the conclusion, in that case, leaves probability behind, and advances to a climax of demonstrative certainty.

If some extraordinary person, for instance, should have been foretold by a prophet, and characterised by the miraculous circumstance of being the son of a virgin—and if this Prophecy should have existed for seven or eight hundred years unfulfilled, because no such phenomenon had, up to that time, ever appeared—it would surely strike a rational observer with a force amounting to *more* than any high degree of probability, if such a person under that essential condition, did at length really enter into the world^a.

This first kind of argument is generally denominated the CONCURRENCE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE. Another kind of argument, however, may be drawn from considering the ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT

^a Aristotle notices the *irrefragable* nature of this species of argument, which he denominates τεκμήριον, or conclusive evidence; μόνον γὰρ (τὸ τεκμήριον) τῶν σημείων, ὧν ἀληθὲς ἦ, ΑΛΥΤΟΝ ἔστι. Rhet. b. i. c. 2.

The col-
lective
mode.

of a whole class of Prophecies, which severally point to the same subject, each arising one above another, in additional descriptions and clearer definitions of the same thing or person, in a manner somewhat analogous to the effect produced by the arrangement of several glasses in a telescope ; the first of which will draw an object, which is afar off, but dimly to the eye ; the second somewhat more distinctly ; the third clearer still ; and so on, until at length all its features are so sensibly discerned, though yet at an immense distance, as to leave no shadow of doubt in fixing its identity.

Now this is precisely the case in the wonderful and almighty mechanism of Prophecy. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This Prophecy, since it did not define more distinctly either "the seed," or "the woman," was but faintly perceptible to the eye of our first parents ; unless indeed the

film of mortal dimness was miraculously removed by the finger of God, so as to vouchsafe to them—what as yet was unripe for revelation to the world at large—a brighter vision of consolation. But the eye of the faithful Abraham and of the Patriarchs saw through the glass still less darkly. Moses beheld God “face to face,” and enjoyed, through faith, a nearer and clearer view of the day of redemption; till at last the “sweet Psalmist of Israel,” and, as time rolled on, the Evangelical Prophet, with all the train of inspiration after him, beheld, and pointed out to the world, in a flood of prophetic light, the “Day spring from on high.”

This *latter* kind of argument enjoys a double advantage; because it not only progressively advances, by reason of our taking a connected view of its order and arrangement, to a point of the highest moral certainty, but may embrace also the other circumstantial method noticed

The
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above, since all the additional circumstances announced by each succeeding prophet, over and above any former predictions, being unconnected with each other, and consequently forming an independent body of evidence, may easily be drawn together, and made to assume a concentrated force of cumulative testimony.

Both apply as
criteria
to prove
the truth
of inspiration.

By either of these methods above laid down, especially the more comprehensive one of the latter, we shall be furnished with just criteria, both to prove the necessity of Divine Prescience, and at the same time to ascertain, with precision and certainty, the unequivocal accomplishment of Prophecy^b. For, on the one hand, if we

^b Mr. Davison lays down three conditions or criteria, in order to prove the inspiration of a Prophecy: first, the known promulgation of the Prophecy, prior to the event: secondly, the clear and palpable fulfilment of it; and, thirdly, the nature of the event itself, whether remote from human views, or at all likely

find history, which is the only true interpreter of prophecy, reflecting back, as in a mirror, even the majority of circumstances foretold as attaching to an event, no reasonable man can surely withhold his assent to the identity of the subject predicted. But how irresistible must be the conclusion, if *every* single circumstance, foretold hundreds of years before the event, and many of them at immense intervals from each other, *does* so exactly suit and harmonize with the historian's narrative, that the Prophecy may almost be taken for the history itself. And, on the other hand, if the nature of the predicted circumstances, when compared with the event, be such as to preclude all idea of connection with that event, so that an *effect* cannot, by any possibility of human foresight or happy conjecture, be traced to

to be the effects of reason, calculation, probability, or experience. *Davison on Prophecy*, p. 404. second edition.

any dependent *cause*, either by the force of experience, in drawing a skilful comparison between probable alternatives, or by the metaphysical knowledge of relations only known by the power of intuition, or by the intervening links of demonstration, the case of a miracle of knowledge is at once determined.

Fore-
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For it is evident to others, as well as to the metaphysical enquirer, that an eternal chasm lies between the relations of cause and effect in abundant problems of the physical world, so as to shut out the light of intuition from the most penetrating eye of human intellect ; and, consequently, an hundredfold more so, in the contingent relations of innumerable alternatives, which hang loosely upon the actions of the moral world^c. But

^c Those, however, who have studied Locke's Essay on the Extent of the Human Understanding, particularly those parts which treat of cause and effect, together with the several relations which ideas bear

what will the sceptic say, if the whole train of circumstances, foretold of the Messiah, instead of offering a clue of probabilities favourable to the event, should appear to all human reason utterly improbable, and even contradictory? He must (unless he purposely shuts his eyes against the light) become a proselyte to the truth of inspiration.

The foreknowledge of actions, performed by free and intellectual beings, can be open only to the Almighty eye. Nor is it at all necessary to the argument from Prophecy to penetrate that awful mystery of the omniscience of God and the free agency of man, or to *account*

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to each other, will more clearly convince their own minds even to demonstration, that it must be a physical impossibility for unaided reason to dive into the awful depths of futurity. The great *practical* use, indeed, of that immortal work, is to excite a deep humility among men of the profoundest knowledge, when they view the shattered fragments of reason even in its highest human perfection.

for their harmony with each other^c. Our own conscience tells us the fact, (which is the highest evidence we ought to wish,) that our will is unfettered: and the detail of Prophecy equally strikes us with a conviction, that Omniscience is able, from the beginning of time, to predetermine *events* without controlling the *actions* of men. The terms of chance and probability (which are but synonyms for human frailty, and a cloak for our ignorance) are matters of certainty and necessity to Him.

Nor opinions on the nature and extent of inspiration.

It would be unsuitable also to the occasion, to discuss the various opinions respecting the nature and extent of inspiration. We may be allowed to observe, however, but not without caution

^c The curious reader, however, may consult with advantage, on this deep subject, the seventh very learned discourse of Mr. Davison, wherein many hazardous positions laid down by Dr. Pearson are censured.

and deference, that the prophets were enabled to predict, more frequently, through the medium of a miraculous intuition of the *event alone*, than by a supernatural view of the whole chain of intermediate causes on which events were suspended^d. Not that they were unable,

^d Frequently, however, the prophets were obliged to use human means, viz. prayer, study, and application, in order to interpret the sense of a former Prophecy, as we read that Zechariah did; even Daniel fasted and prayed that he might understand Jeremiah's prediction of the seventy weeks; and yet the ability to declare another man's thoughts, as when he declared what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed on his bed and forgotten, was as convincing a proof of the miraculous indwelling of the Spirit within him, as our Saviour's declaration of the secrets of the heart was to the woman of Samaria.

Besides this mode of communicating the Divine will to man, which is called Inspiration, the *four* others were, 1. The Shechinah, or the voice of God from the mercy-seat between the cherubim. 2. The Urim and Thummim, or miraculous response from the high-priest's breast-plate, concerning which the reader may consult the very curious accounts related

sometimes, to take a steady and connected view of the whole mystic train of human contingencies, of innumerable causes productive of innumerable effects, and forming successive links to fresh causes utterly incalculable; but it is clear that this would not be the *reason* they would assign, *to themselves* at least, for believing the truth of an event. For the knowledge of the connection between the extremes was of itself a miracle. Yet they would frequently assign *to others* some intermediate cause as a proof to enforce belief *on them*, because they were never able to reveal to others the manner in which they distinguished their own natural thoughts from Divine Revela-

by Prideaux. 3. Dreams; and, 4. visions, or ecstatic trances, whose revelations were made by lively symbols; as in that awful vision of Eliphaz the Temanite, related in Job, which, by the way, is quoted by Dr. Smith, in his translation of Longinus, as a fine instance of the sublime.

tions, any more than one of us (and perhaps much less so) can clearly relate how we are able to distinguish the style of one artist from another. When Elisha, for example, foretold to Hazael, that he would commit such horrible barbarities, he proved it to him by foretelling also an intervening contingency, viz. that he would be "king over Syria;" but *this* was of itself a miracle, and required something else to prove the truth of that to himself. The severity of the Mosaic Law^e, which enacted capital

* Two rules were laid down by Moses, whereby a false prophet might be detected. First, if any event which was predicted did not take place according to the Prophet's words. Secondly, if a prophet attempted to introduce *any other God* except Jehovah. Now it is observable, that the *gift of miracles* is not adduced as a test of prophetic inspiration; since many false prophets were permitted by the Almighty to perform signs and wonders, in aid of idolatry, in order to prove the servants of the true God; as in St. Paul's famous prophecy of the "Man of sin," or Antichrist, whose coming should be "after the working of Satan

punishment against false prophets, guarded against the attempts of imposture, or the enthusiasm of fanatics. Nothing less than the force of intuitive certainty could have given that air of authority to the expression, "Thus saith the Lord." Sometimes indeed the word was like a still small voice within them, but more frequently "like a burning fire shut up in their bones^f," which compelled them to speak. In a word, the prophets *knew* themselves to be inspired, from a consciousness of the divine oracle within them. "They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And in the same manner as *we* are the most clearly and

with all power, and signs, and *lying wonders*," or rather, (as the learned Cudworth explains the *τίγματα ψεύδους*) wonders done for the confirmation of a lie; not the juggling tricks of magic, but real miracles; else how could they be said to be performed "with all power, according to the working of Satan?" See this opinion of Cudworth in his *Intellectual System*. vol. iii. p. 356.

^f Jer. xx. 8.

strongly convinced of a few truths by the flash of intuition, without being able to account for it; *they could*, by means of a supernatural intuition, instantaneously view and declare things, for ages to come, as though already past.

It will fall therefore within the limits of the present design, to apply the principles above laid down, chiefly to that class of Prophecy which relates to the Messiah. For, besides that the other heads of Prophecy, relative to the Jews, and to the heathen nations, form but intermediate links to the grand chain of Prophecy,—a consideration rather, of those predictions announcing the advent, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, must necessarily embrace the other important branch of external evidence, viz. the truth of Gospel miracles; and moreover, since the prophets especially view the Messiah under the threefold character of a prophet, a priest, and a king, the beautiful features of the internal evidences also of Christianity

Application
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will naturally present themselves to our notice. We shall be led, moreover, to see more closely the intimate union and harmony between the Old covenant and the New; and become hence better enabled to form some conception, though faint and inadequate, of the grasp of prophetic revelation.

Answer
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of ob-
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in some
Prophe-
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The obscurity of those predictions respecting the Messiah, recorded in the book of Genesis, so far from being objectionable, is a proof of the extraordinary wisdom of the Divine economy; because if the veil had been drawn aside too early, and had discovered at once the inestimable blessings of the New covenant, the Israelites would naturally have rejected the Old, and have felt it a weary and irksome task to have imbibed wholesome lessons from the law—the “schoolmaster which was to bring them to Christ.”

But this apparent objection (like many others of the same kind) furnishes not a shadow of proof against the inspiration

of Scripture. For, if a *few* Prophecies, issued at the beginning of time, seemed to be enveloped in darkness, a multitude of others gradually arose, like lights in the world, to penetrate and illumine the mystery of the more obscure.

It will be a clearer plan then for us to examine, first, some of the more distinct and luminous Prophecies, and to carry them, as lamps before us, towards the deeper and more mysterious abysses of futurity.

There is a single verse in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, which declares, among other qualities attributed to the Messiah, *two* points at least, with respect to his human nature and divinity, so clearly and distinctly, that the Jews could not have mistaken the *sense of the prophet's words*, however they might have been at a loss to conceive *the nature of the thing*, and to understand *how* the mystery could be fulfilled in one and the same person. In

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the same manner as the Evangelist St. John proposes this mystery to our belief, in terms as simple as language can express, though the *mode* of its existence is beyond our reason. When the Jews heard or read these words, "Unto us a Child is born," their first impression would naturally interpret them of some one about to be born in the usual course of nature, who would surely partake of human flesh and blood; and yet, since the same Child has other qualities here assigned to him, or, in prophetic language, is expressly called "the mighty God," and "the everlasting Father," (or the Father of eternity,) they could not deny, but that the literal and simple words conveyed some ideas of the union of Deity with humanity. So far the passage was clear of itself, and required no other Scripture to interpret the *meaning of the words*. But when they reflected further, that this Child, which was to be born,

was preeminently styled by name 'Wonderful,' they could hardly avoid connecting it with a Prophecy almost immediately preceding, when the hypocritical Ahaz had refused the offer of a sign, and Isaiah therefore appealed to the house of David, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign, (or *wonder*, σημειῶν,) Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." It required, indeed, *other* Scriptures also to interpret the same "wonderful" Child to be the "Son" of God gratuitously "given;" and also the spiritual King, on whose "shoulders" should hang the keys of heaven and hell^ε; and the "Counsellor"^h,

^ε The shapes of ancient keys were long, with a hook at the end, and were generally suspended from the shoulder.

^h The Septuagint translate, (according to the Exemplar Vaticanum,) Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος, (but according to the Alexandrine Codex,) Ἄγγελος, Θεουμαστός, σύμβουλος, ἰσχυρὸς, ἐξουσιαστής, ἄρχων εἰρήνης, πατὴρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.

who held communion from the beginning with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in the great consultation, "Let us make man in our image;" and, lastly, "the Prince of Peace," the Shiloh, the Peacemaker, or Mediator, to restore that fallen image to the favour of its Creator. Yet it is remarkable, that the parts of this Prophecy, declaratory of God in the flesh, which are the most difficult of human comprehension, are, *in point of expression*, (like the same doctrine of St. John,) the most clearly and unequivocally statedⁱ.

ⁱ A proper view of this celebrated Prophecy is an abundant answer to the trite objection of the sceptic against Christianity, on the ground of *mystery*; "Where mystery begins; religion ends." Now, the fact is, that if we read the word *begins*, instead of the word *ends*, "Where religion begins, mystery begins," we shall come nearer the truth; otherwise it proves too much, and annihilates all religion whatever; for what religion ever existed without a God? and what is God but the most profound mystery?

To foretel the precise TIME of the ^{National} Messiah's advent, as in the prophetic signs.
 benediction of Jacob, or in the prediction of Daniel, by the voice of the angel, is one of the strongest evidences of Divine prescience. Spurious oracles^k have at times succeeded, either from accident or political sagacity, in foretelling that an event should take place at some *indefinite* time or other; but to

^k The same illustration which a famous logical writer hit upon in exposing the artifices of sophistry, as producing a contrary effect to that of sound logic, will apply to the trickeries of the Delphian Tripod. "He who has himself been behind the scenes of a puppet-show, and pulled the strings by which the figures are moved, is not likely to be much affected by their performance."

Aristotle, in his Rhetoric, expresses incidentally his opinion of the quibbles of oracle-mongers: καὶ διὰ τὸ ὅλως ἑλαττον εἶναι ἀμάχημα, διὰ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ πράγματος λίγουσιν οἱ μάντις. Rhet. lib. ii. c. 5. But how different does the historian Josephus speak of the true prophet and "greatly beloved" Daniel: οὐ γὰρ τὰ μέλλοντα μόνον προφητεύων διετέλει, καθάπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι προφῆται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ὀρίζει, εἰς ὃν ταῦτα ἀποβήσεται. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11.

Daniel's state *minutely* the number of years, or
 Pro-
 phecy of prophetic weeks, which should elapse be-
 the se-
 venty between the edict of Artaxerxes to restore
 weeks. Jerusalem, and the crucifixion of the
 Messiah, takes it at once out of the grasp
 of human conjecture¹. It was essential

¹ The sum of Prideaux's long dissertation on the
 "seventy weeks" is shortly this. He places the cruci-
 fixation at the *end* of the seventy weeks, (or 490 years,
 i. e. each day being a prophetic year,) and not *im-*
mediately after the seven weeks, and threescore and
 two weeks, (or 483 years,); because, if the words,
 "Unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks,
 and threescore and two weeks," meant unto the *ad-*
vent of the Messiah—and then, if the following
 words, "and *after* threescore and two weeks shall
 Messiah be cut off," meant *immediately after*—these
 two passages would make the advent and crucifixion
 happen at the same time, without leaving any space
 for Christ's ministry on earth. If the crucifixion be
 fixed at the end of the seventy weeks, the commence-
 ment of them will be exactly in the 457th year be-
 fore the birth of Christ, (the seventh year of Arta-
 xerxes Longimanus.) From this date then, seven weeks
 (or 49 years) are exactly computed from "the going
 forth of the commandment;" (viz. that given by

to the *use and intent of Prophecy*^m, to mark the advent by the SIGNS OF THE

Artaxerxes to Ezra, to restore and to build Jerusalem,) until the full establishment of the Jewish state by Nehemiah; then threescore and two weeks (or 434 years) are found to come down precisely to the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry, when the Messiah may be truly said to have begun to confirm the covenant of the Gospel by his forerunner. If the Baptist's ministry lasted three years and a half, the last prophetic week will be divided into two parts; the first half dedicated to the Baptist's ministry, and the last half to the ministry of the Messiah, the end of which is called the "midst of the week," when the sacrifice and oblation should cease by the offering of Himself, once for all, upon the cross.

^m Of the several critical views on the use and intent of Prophecy, the sum may be reduced to *four* heads, or a fourfold subdivision of one grand end. First, to establish the faith of a special Providence. Secondly, to predict judgments against vice and infidelity, but divine favour to virtue and faith. Thirdly, to raise an expectation, amid temporal ills and captivities, of a Redeemer. And, lastly, to attest the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. See Horne's Introduction, p. 30. vol. i. also Sherlock on the use and intent of Prophecy. The studious reader of Prophecy will, of course, not fail to connect Mr.

times. For it not only kept alive a universal expectation of Him who should come, but reminded also the Jews, that the God of Jacob, who had led them out of Egypt, was still their political ruler, and that the rise and fall of kingdoms were under his immediate control. Until Shiloh^a, or the Peace-maker, came, (a term always applied by the Jews to the Messiah,) “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah;” the

**Jacob's
Pro-
phesy.**

Horne's account of Prophecy in the first volume of his “Introduction,” with the prophetic sense unfolded in the second vol. and also with his general observations on the prophets, in the fourth vol. of the same invaluable work.

^a *Shiloh*, Gen. xlix. 10. One of the best comments on this celebrated word is to be found in Cruden's Concordance (in loc.) Jerom translates it by, *Qui mittendus est*, and manifestly reads, *Shiloach*, sent, instead of *Shiloh*, a Saviour or peace-maker, from the root *Shalah*, “he was quiet, in peace, happy. Some translate, however, the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, “*till he comes to whom it belongs;*” others, till the birth of him who shall be born of a woman, who shall conceive without the knowledge of a man; others from *Shalah*, which sometimes signifies, to suffer, &c. &c.

prediction evidently implied that *before* that time it should depart from the *other* tribes, since the tribe of Benjamin was considered merely as an appendage to Judah, and therefore continued to enjoy the same rulers. Accordingly Judah continued a separate and favoured tribe from the period of its infancy up to its final dissolution—"strong as a lion"—governed by a prince, even in the Babylonish captivity, and maintaining supreme power as the head and founder of the Jews, till at last that remnant was compelled to bow to the Roman yoke. Now it is clearly attested by Josephus, that the vassal king, Archelaus, was dethroned and banished, Coponius appointed procurator, and the kingdom of Judæa degraded into a Roman province, as a melancholy adjunct to Syria, during the very year that Christ "the Lord, (according to the prediction of Malachi) suddenly came to his temple." And indeed we see this tribu-

tary people soon after acknowledging to the Shiloh himself that they *did*, whether they thought it lawful or not, render unto Cæsar his due. But whether the departure of the sceptre from Judah is to be understood of the dethronement of Archelaus, (as the earlier Jewish writers maintained,) or of the Jewish nation altogether under that peculiar denomination, (as the later writers urged,) it is now no longer doubtful that the authority of Judah and the glory of Jerusalem have passed away; for any hesitation among expositors about the precise time of the fulfilment of each particular, can no more alter the validity of the fact, than any doubt respecting the chronology of Darius the Mede could make us question the existence of Babylon.

Isaiah's
Pro-
phesy of
a golden
age.

Another great *national* sign also was predicted as a necessary condition of the Messiah's advent, viz. that He should be ushered into the world at a time of universal peace. The Jews had long be-

forehand so interpreted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah; yet it can hardly be imagined that they really believed, at that time at least, the literal fulfilment of savage nature yielding to an innocent and golden age°. Such a vivid description might indeed well apply to the nature, design, and tendency of the Gospel—to tame and soften the fierce and vicious propensities

° Among the learned commentators who have compared this prediction of Isaiah with the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, Bp. Lowth is of opinion that the style of the Poet is so suddenly elevated from his usual calm and tranquil flow of ideas, to an unusual swell of images and metaphorical diction, that he thinks the mind of the Poet *must* have received some mysterious impression by a divine influence. And Cudworth also, in his Intellectual System, pronounces more positively, that, if the Poet drew his materials from the oracles of the Cumæan Sibyl, the Sibylline verses must have derived much, some how or other, from the Scripture Prophecies. Nor does it seem more strange, that the Messiah should be predicted by the Pagan Sibyl, than that he was so clearly foretold by Balaam, the Aramitic Sorcerer. See Cudworth's *Remarks on the Sibylline Oracles*.

of fallen nature, and to make men become "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." And that such a happy state of things would of necessity ensue from a universal reception of the Gospel, there is a kind of proof approaching to demonstration. For, supposing that every human impediment and opposition both of spiritual and temporal enemies *could* be removed from the world—the sacred volume, sent forth by the strong arm of Omnipotence, *would* produce the most perfect and virtuous energies among the whole human race—would restore the defaced image of fallen man to its primeval beauty and simplicity—would call a new world into existence^p, and create

^p "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth." Isaiah lxx. 17. This was a usual prophetic expression for a change, not of the constitution of nature, but of the Divine dispensation. Butler, in his *Analogy*, has conceived a fine idea of this supposed Christian monarchy.

one universal monarchy of divine harmony and Christian love.

In illustration of this theory, an humble analogy may be drawn from the well-known principle of a law of nature in mechanics, called the “*vis inertię*,” where the impulse of a body once sent forth is such, that an approach to perpetual motion is attained in proportion as the obstacles which retard its progress are smoothed away^p. How far, however, this Prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Hezekiah; and how much farther at the birth of Christ; and again, how it continues, at this time, to advance to a still brighter state of things; we shall see more fully in the view taken hereafter of the *double sense* of Prophecy.

Accordingly, not only the Jewish, but

^p See Abp. Whately's ingenious application of this mode of argument in proof of the existence and moral attributes of the Deity. *Rhetoric*, part i. c. 2.

the Roman historians also agree in testifying this *universal expectation*,¹ throughout the whole of the East, that some mysterious and triumphant Personage was about to arise. For it is easily perceivable, that the expression used by

¹ This expectation had, of course, been kept up from the age of Malachi, when the gift of Prophecy ceased; and it is not improbable, that the strong hope and expectation evinced by Socrates and Plato, that the Deity would make a discovery of his will at some future time, originated not only from the probability of the case, but from sources of knowledge which they did not confess, viz. from the dispersion of the prophetic writings over the heathen world.

The famous passages from Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, and Philo, are too well known to require quotation.

The frequent appellation of Malachi-Jehovah given to the prophets, led Origen into the erroneous notion, that Malachi was an incarnate angel sent by God. Jerome and Calmet thought Malachi to be the same person as Ezra—but the internal evidence of the book proves the author to have been cotemporary with Nehemiah.

Tacitus, viz. that certain *persons*, (profecti,) instead of a single personage, (ὁ ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ εἰς τὸν κόσμον,) should issue forth to govern the world, was evidently a corruption of the usual periphrasis which designated the Messiah, and was purposely inserted to flatter his royal masters, Titus and Vespasian. It is, nevertheless, a certain truth, as also an extraordinary proof of the hand of Providence controlling the *events*, though *not* the *actions*, of men, that this strong expectation among the Jews, of a temporal deliverer, was the unconscious instrument, when blind infatuation led the way, to hurry them on to their revolt and final desolation. The Prophet's eye clearly foresaw the peaceful reign of the Augustan age; and it is highly probable that his understanding was sufficiently enlightened, by Divine Prescience, to have seen the use, intent, and necessity of such a state of the world for the first opening of the

Gospel covenant. Not that an universal peace would be the *human* means of its propagation; (for if, on the one hand, nations had greater facilities of listening to a new religion, they had abundant leisure, on the other, to attack all religious innovations; besides being at such a time far more likely to be content with their own;) but a more excellent design of Providence was apparent—a way was thus opened for ALL who heard these extraordinary tidings, to come and see, to trace the mystery to its source, (as the Magi did,) and to deliver its sifted credentials to future ages.

The Augustan age was, indeed, the “fulness of time.” It was peculiarly marked as the golden era of reason, and the most brilliant record of the historian; distinguished by a constellation, or galaxy, as it were, of poets, of orators, of philosophers, and of historians, enlightened by every refinement of art and

science, and arrayed with the knowledge, *but the knowledge only*^r, of moral philosophy. Yet such an age as this was confessedly unable, even in its meridian brightness, either to discover a satisfactory remedy for the maladies of fallen

^r Besides the innumerable references given upon this point, by Horne and other commentators, we may remark of Aristotle, in his Ethics, that he well understood the *design* of a moral treatise to be *ὁ γινῶσις ἀλλὰ πράξις*. Yet if we try, by that standard, the moral history of his age, we shall find to our grief and pity but a scanty portion of individuals, like a few distant stars, glimmering in a midnight of national darkness and depravity, or like the lucky few who have escaped from a shipwreck;

“ Apparent *rari nantes* in gurgite vasto.”

Still, in drawing a comparison between Heathen and Christian countries, in this respect, we must consider their relative proportions of *individual* rather than of *national* morality; or even our Christian land must blush with shame and confusion to confess, that its *proportion* of moral and religious practice as a *nation* is lamentably unequal to the light of knowledge which has shone around it.

nature, or to enforce motives among the wisest to *practise* what was taught.

Personal
signs.

Again ; the time of the Saviour's approach was still more accurately marked by PERSONAL, as well as NATIONAL, signs. The last of the Prophets, who sealed up the covenant of the Old Testament until the coming of the second Elijah, pointed

The se-
cond Eli-
jah.

directly to a Prophetic messenger, who should usher into Jehovah's temple "the Prince of Peace." His office was to resemble the usual harbingers of Eastern potentates ; but the rude and simple garb of a prophet was to contrast with any gorgeous display of Tyrian purple, or of "soft raiment." This circumstance alone, whether the Baptist was believed to be truly Elias, or some one in the spirit and power of Elias, ought to have led the Jews to expect a Master, at least, in some measure conformable to the external appearance of the *servant* "preparing his way."

Thus then the signs of the times are so clearly defined, that no one but the true Messiah himself could possibly have harmonized with such particulars as these. He was to come (as He did) *before* the sceptre of Judah was broken—*before* the temple was destroyed—and immediately *after* the announcement of a prophetic herald.

The inspired prescience of Micah the Morasthite ¹ is clearly established, by the singular minuteness with which he pointed out the exact spot that was to be the birth-place of the Son of God. He not only distinctly mentions the name of Bethlehem, but

Local
Prophe-
cy of
Micah.

¹ Dr. Hales divides this famous Prophecy into four parts; 1. the human birth-place of Christ; 2. his eternal generation; 3. his temporary desertion of the Jews; 4. his spiritual and universal dominion. Micah was the third of the Minor Prophets, and cotemporary with Isaiah, Joel, Hosea, and Amos. His style is strong and concise, and in some parts truly sublime. See also Horne's account of this prophet, vol. iv.

of Bethlehem Ephratah, to distinguish it from another place of the same name in the tribe of Zabulon; as if the prophet foresaw the mistakes, which future Rabbies and Interpreters would make, in confusing this Prophecy of the Messiah's birth-place with Isaiah's prediction of the place where he was to *preach* and *publish* his Gospel. And it is remarkable, that the Jews in our Saviour's time *did* sadly mistake, or altogether overlook, not indeed this Prophecy of Micah, (which was next to impossible,) but that very prediction of the cotemporary prophet, Isaiah, that "in Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." And, in their wilful blindness and averseness to harmonize one passage of Scripture with another, they all along adopted the gross error of supposing our Saviour to have been a Nazarite by birth, instead of a Bethlehemite. For, in St. John's account of their conflicting opi-

Wilful
mistake
of the
Jews
as to our
Lord's
birth-
place.

nions respecting his origin, and place of nativity, they gave no *proof*, at least, of their assertion, that they “knew whence he was;” and they betrayed equal ignorance also, or rather perverseness, in the interpretation of the latter part of Micah’s Prophecy, where, in the very same verse which mentions the human birth-place of the Messiah, a clear distinction is drawn as to the divine origin of that same Person, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” But the Jews, misconceiving the twofold nature of the Messiah’s origin, and concluding—either from the traditions of their rabbies, or from a wrong interpretation of Isaiah’s question, “Who shall declare his generation?” or again, from the mysterious type of Melchisedek—that they should know little or nothing about Him, involved themselves in a labyrinth of darkness and perplexity; because, if they were *not* to know clearly his line of descent,

Also as
to his
twofold
origin.

how could they have applied the other Prophecies, respecting his lineage from Judah and David, in order to identify the true Messiah? This local Prophecy of Micah, however, had so surely fixed the birth-place of the Messiah, that not even the Jews could mistake that; the wise men convened by Herod pronounced it decisive; and, as a separate prophecy, it is the most important and comprehensive of all. For, in the words of an eminent Divine, it winds up the whole chain of those predictions which limit the blessed "seed of the woman" to the line of Shem; to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to the tribe of Judah; and, lastly, to the royal house in the "city of David."

Improbability of a Bethlehemite Messiah a proof of inspiration. The *improbability* of the lowly Bethlehem giving birth to a Ruler in Israel, affords a further proof of the prophet's inspiration. This little city, though it had formed the scene of the beautiful

eclogue of Ruth, and hence become the "city of David," had never been considered of sufficient importance, like the other divisions of Judæa, to send forth a leader to battle. The judgments also denounced against the degenerate state of David's house would naturally add to the improbability of a brighter prospect, if we did not consider the uniform practice of the prophets, in blending mercies and judgments together. And these improbabilities continued up to the very eve of the accomplishment. Nor is it necessary to enquire, whether the prophet's eye was guided by Divine Prescience to foresee the extraordinary contingency which brought about such an incalculable event; because the same Omniscient Spirit, which breathed the oracle, and "knoweth man's heart," could doubtless *foreknow*, without *controlling*, the exact state of mind that would dictate the policy of Augustus, in taxing the Roman world; and thus, through the un-

conscious agency and free will of man, both perform his promise to David, and look down upon the "low estate of his handmaiden."

Con-
nected
view of
Prophe-
cy.

From this point we are naturally led to trace the line of the Messiah's descent.

We find it drawn with the most accurate precision, by a succession of prophetic writers, and in exact accordance with the two genealogical registers recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Hitherto only single and detached Prophecies have been examined. But the nature of the subject now invites us to take a connected view of the harmony of successive writers. The scene enlarges, and we cannot but view, in holy wonder, with what exquisite perfection the united energies of the prophetic pencil have drawn to the very life the full "tree of righteousness," from the root of Adam, up to the holy Branch of the blessed Virgin. And it will not merely add a beauty to the unity of

the subject, but create in us the deepest feelings of gratitude, as well as the sublimest ideas of Supreme goodness, if we contemplate this mighty chain of Prophecy as ONE DETERMINATE PROMISE, renewed at different times to console the righteous few, to keep awake the eye of faith, and to display, even to the wicked, the union of Divine mercy with avenging judgment.

The promise of a Redeemer, given to our first parents after the fall, (as briefly noticed above,) though in a dim and general outline, was yet sufficient to arrest their faith in some immortal victory, which "the seed of the woman" should gain over the serpent. This mystery, the same prophetic historian tells us, was graciously drawn in clearer characters to the eye of the faithful Abraham¹; yet the *general* promise had been

As our
deter-
minate
promis

¹ Abraham is supposed by some commentators to have been, before his call, an idolater, chiefly from an expression in the fourteenth chapter of St. Paul

given for the benefit of *all* the sons of Adam, since it was revealed *before* the preference given to Seth, and to the favoured line of Shem, Abraham, Jacob, and Judah. And here it will be well for our finite judgment to make a clear and accurate distinction between the *unconditional promise* of God to man, and his *conditional covenant* with man.

Distinction between an unconditional promise and a conditional covenant.

That the seed of the woman should *bruise* the serpent's head, was an eternal promise, an unconditional and unalterable decree: but in order that the Redeemer's blood might prove, on our parts, a complete *death-blow* to that serpent, and a perfect antidote to its deadly poison, the condition of a lively faith made up the terms proposed

to the Romans, where God is represented as justifying by faith the *ungodly*, (*ἀσεβεις*.) But Dr. Blomfield, in his Digest, (in loc.) remarks, that as Abraham was never *proved* to be such, it is better to expound the word, as a *sinner* against the *revealed* will of God.

to us, and thus assumed the nature of a covenant. The *promise*, indeed, implied conditions only on the part of the *Giver*, (which were fully realized by the death of Christ,) but the *covenant* enjoined conditions also on the part of the *receiver* *.

The promise given to Abraham (his faith being foreseen) intimated, for the first time, the universal extent of the Gospel over the whole Gentile world. The same promise, for the sake of the Father of the faithful, was confirmed to his son Isaac, and the favoured Jacob, in the vision of the mystical ladder, which typified the covenant of grace, held communion with heaven, and heard the voice of the Almighty renew the "oath that He swore unto Abraham." The prophetic blessing

* The orthodox doctrine of the covenant, as regards its *conditional* nature, was clearly pointed out and established in an admirable discourse preached lately by the present Regius Professor of Divinity, (Dr. Burton,) before the University, at Christ Church.

of this dying patriarch^{*} rested upon Judah, whom his brethren (according to the

^{*} The supposition, among the early Greeks, of a prophetic spirit issuing from the mouth of a dying person, probably derived its origin, according to many learned divines, from *traditions of holy writ* dispersed among the heathen even so early as the age of Homer. No Christian reader of the classics, however, can fail to notice many extraordinary resemblances between the Iliad or Odyssey and the Old Testament. The Poet calls the rainbow a *wonder* or *sign* (*τίγας*) fixed by Jove in the clouds. Compare Iliad, lib. ii. v. 28. with Gen. ix. 12. Again, the two urns said by the Poet to be full of good and evil mixture, are very similar to the seventy-fifth Psalm, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup," &c. The description also of the "shield of Achilles," however it may or may *not* argue some knowledge of the Mosaic account of the creation, does certainly present some very sublime ideas of the Deity, though under the heathen name of Jove, as Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and all the wonders they contain. And again, that delusive dream which Jupiter is represented as sending to Agamemnon, how extremely alike is it to the "lying spirit" permitted by Jehovah to go forth and strike the rash and profligate Ahab with judicial blindness? See more on this subject in Grey's "Connection."

import of his name) should *praise*, and acknowledge as their *Leader*. The refreshing promise flowed through the channel of the favoured Patriarch, at first, indeed, like the current of a deep yet narrow stream: but it soon enlarged its bounds, and augmented its tides of "living water," growing wider and wider, until it became a mighty river. Nor does its course stop here; for it will continue still to roll onward, till it shall mingle with "the waters that cover the sea," and be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity.

Thus far we trace the promise renewed, at different times, to the Patriarchs. A twofold benefit was uniformly *implied*, both of temporal prosperity, and of spiritual blessedness. The latter was but darkly insinuated, because the Divine counsel willed that the advent of the Blessing itself should reveal the full extent of the promise, and bring "life and immortality to light."

Neces-
sity for
predict-
ing the
external
condi-
tion and
personal
charac-
ter of
the Mes-
siah.

As it was designed to be a strong test of inspiration, so it was also a most needful help to guide our faith in surely fixing the accomplishment of Prophecy, that every circumstance, first, of the EXTERNAL CONDITION, and secondly, of the PERSONAL CHARACTER of the Messiah, should be faithfully delineated beforehand. Because, of the former, each coincidence depended upon *others*, and it would therefore have been morally impossible for any impostor, however ingenious, to *take upon himself* to fulfil conditions altogether out of his reach, though he might have attempted, perhaps, to assume the *moral character* of the exalted pattern of Divine excellence; the counterfeit of the latter, however, would have been as complete a failure as that of the former.

Zecha-
riah's
Prophe-
cy of
Mes-
siah's
entry
into Je-
rusalem.

In accordance, then, with the humility of the Messiah's birth, parentage, and education, Zechariah, the clearest and most evangelical of the prophets next to Isaiah, draws a picture of the promised Shepherd

as a Spiritual *King*, entering Jerusalem, not in the warlike pride and forbidden strength of chariots and of horses, (which had been the ruin instead of the deliverance of Israel,) but in the primitive simplicity of the patriarchs and Prophets of old, “ lowly, and riding upon an ass’.”

’ See Matt. xxi. 4. In repeated passages of the New Testament, where Christ is recorded as acting, “ that it might be fulfilled,” &c. it is clear that He did not designedly TAKE UPON HIMSELF to fulfil a circumstance or event, *because* a prophet had foretold it, but, inasmuch as God had previously decreed an event, the prophet therefore foretold it, and a special act of Providence *controlled the event*, since God has the power of foreknowing *how* the allowed freedom of man’s heart will favour the accomplishment. (So that in such passages as these the Greek particle *ὅτι* is exactly equivalent to *Scilicet*. See the passage quoted in Valpy’s Edition of the New Testament.) For it is evident that, in this case, the act of letting the ass go with the disciples, for the use of their Master, depended on the *will* of the owner, which *will* might surely be miraculously foreknown to our Lord without being controlled, and thus properly be called an external condition.

From the circumstances, noticed above, of the lowly Bethlehem having been foretold as the birth-place of the Messiah, and no less from Malachi's prediction of a forerunner, in the usual garb and poverty of a prophet's external condition, the Jews ought to have expected (if pride had not warped their judgment) some union, at least, of external humility with the glory of a triumphant Redeemer. But one would almost suppose, that the ancient Jewish expositors, *before* the Advent, had interpreted the whole of the 53d chapter of Isaiah (as the modern ones do now) to have been a picture drawn by their prophet, not of the Messiah, but of the future woes of their nation, under the poetical figure of Personification. That this Prophecy *was* formerly applied to Christ, is a fact too well attested to admit of any doubt; and yet, that they should have so wilfully overlooked all those passages, which plainly indicate a state of trial and humiliation,

External
humility
of Mes-
siah a
chief
feature
of Pro-
phesy.

seems to amount almost to a miraculous fulfilment of the opening of the 53d chapter, "who hath believed our report?" since it is remarkable that the next verse states the lowly condition of the Mediator, as the *reason* for their unbelief. "For (says the prophet) He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground;" evidently meaning, that the obscurity of the Messiah's birth, parentage, and education would predispose the Jews to disbelieve the report.

But the prophet's eye pierces still deeper into futurity—time itself vanishes—the accomplishment and prediction appear the same—and by a splendid transition of diction he seems to behold "the Man of sorrows" already "acquainted with grief:" as if the scene of a weeping Saviour over the tomb of Lazarus, or of patriotic tears shed over the apostate Jerusalem, had burst upon his vision. It is, indeed, an historical painting. "Surely He hath

Fifty-
third
chapter
of Isaiah
an his-
torical
painting.

borne our griefs," (did He not, in an agony and bloody sweat?) "and carried our sorrows," (did He not "bear our sins in his own body on the tree?") "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities." If the Jewish nation be the personified sufferer, as the modern rabbies attempt to explain it away, in *whose* name, we may ask with the Ethiopian eunuch, doth the prophet speak this? For *how* could the body of the Jewish people of itself, both personify the sufferer, and be at the same time the nation *for whom* it suffered? or *how* could the unrepining innocence of the victim be predicated of *them*? "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Who, but the one great Antitype of the Jewish sacrifice, on whose spotless and atoning head "the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all?" Who, but the one great High Priest, in the twofold character of a divine and human Mediator, *could* give "his own soul

(which generally means *life* in Scripture) as an offering for sin, and make intercession for the transgressors." The picture is ready drawn for our eyes ; we need only look, or cast but a faint glance upon the outline, and we cannot help seeing the resemblance. How much more, then, when we dissect the features of it, and apply, as it were, the microscope to the most minute and delicate touches of the prophetic pencil. If the *subject* of this chapter had been formally mentioned by name, it would evidently have been too clear, since those external circumstances which depended upon the free will of others might have been counteracted, and the accomplishment of Prophecy defeated. But *because* the name was not fixed to the title page, every attribute is, for that very reason, more emphatic and characteristic. The copy, in short, could never have been drawn, unless the prophet

had kept the Great Original before his eye^r.

² From many points of resemblance, between the particulars here foretold of a suffering Messiah, and the sublime description of the "Prometheus vinctus" of Æschylus, Tertullian and some other ancient fathers have gone *so far* as to assert, that the poet *intended* in this tragedy to pourtray the character of a Divine Mediator. The body of the suffering benefactor to mortals was barred to a rock, "the cross of Caucasus," (as Tertullian calls it,) his hands were fixed with the iron, but his limbs were not broken; and he was taunted with the reproachful irony of his enemies, under the allegorical personages Force and Strength. The eagerness of the fathers, to bring heathen testimony in aid of Gospel truth, must be their apology for straining such an analogy as this; still it is not an improbable conjecture, that Æschylus may have drawn *incidentally* many of the materials for this tragedy from translations or traditions of sacred writ. Dr. Gray in his "Connection" favours this opinion, and describes this extraordinary machine of the poet with the sublime spirit of an Æschylus. "We behold him (Prometheus) appealing to the elements, when oppressed by a severe decree, glorying in an immortal spirit, incapable of destruc-

Yet, perfect as are the prophetic descriptions of Isaiah, it was in harmony with the scheme of inspiration that the external condition of the Son of David should be portrayed with equal energy by David himself.

With regard to the prophetic nature of the Psalms, whoever acquaints himself with the argument, the historical origin, the style and peculiar structure of each, cannot fail to distinguish the spirit of Prophecy which breathes throughout the whole. He will see that the two SENSES^a in them, inimitably blended together, yet so far perfectly distinct from each other, as to mark a twofold design of the author, tion, though the earth should be shaken to its foundation, and he himself be precipitated into the gulph of Tartarus, and predicting the future state of his oppressor."

In Bp. Horne's fine commentary on the Psalms, the two-fold sense of many of those divine odes is clearly proved and beautifully illustrated.

Double
sense of
Prophe-
cy.

form one continued allegory; not raised upon fiction, (like the inventions of human analogy,) but built on historical facts and incidents in the life of the *literal* David; shadowed out and illustrated by himself, but still mystically carried on to a brighter scene and a fuller accomplishment in the person of the *spiritual* David. Nor let it be imagined, that because the Old Testament was divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, David was therefore excluded from both the former classes. The Psalms claimed a separate distinction, inasmuch as they formed a complete epitome of the Bible; they are the most luminous and harmonious commentaries both upon the Law and the Prophets, and have been styled with exquisite beauty, from the last prayer which the spiritual David used upon the cross, "the manual of the Son of God."

The double sense of Prophecy, instead of being an objection, on the ground of obscurity, ought rather to be considered as a most important proof of the intimate connection between the Old and New Covenant. It was a vast design and a wonderful expedient of Providence, beyond the grasp of human reason or ingenuity, to maintain the dignity of the old dispensation, and, at the same time, to keep alive an expectation of something better to succeed. Thus, in Isaiah's figurative and glowing prediction of a golden age of universal peace, a partial fulfilment of it by the deliverance of Ahaz from his enemies, was but a kind of token or forerunner, as the first-fruits of a still more happy state under the first dawn of the Gospel reign—and no less to us also the comparative happiness of Christ's kingdom already flourishing upon earth is both a further accomplishment of the same Prophecy, and a cheering

sign for us to trust in a still more complete fulfilment, when the Gospel shall spread its branches over the whole earth in a glorious Millenium of Christian peace¹.

Twenty-second
Psalm a
prophe-
tic dirge.

The same remarks, therefore, offered respecting the evangelical Prophet, are equally applicable to the pathetic detail of circumstances in the twenty-second Psalm; composed and chaunted by the "sweet Psalmist of Israel," as a prophetic dirge for the Saviour upon the cross. Such a vivid and impassioned description would lose all its energy, if

¹ A general belief in the *near* approach of the Millenium, or joyful sabbath of a thousand years, is adduced by the insidious Gibbon, as one of his five human causes for the rapid spread of Christianity. But Bp. Watson well repelled the poisonous weapon, by arguing, that any such opinion was directly refuted by St. Paul (2 Thessalonians) as a mistake, and vague tradition. For he says, "let no one deceive you, as that the day of the Lord is at hand."

applied merely to the temporal misfortunes of the literal David. But when we turn from the forsaken king to his great Antitype, and lay the twenty-second Psalm by the side of the cross, every feature of the agonizing picture starts into being; our eyes almost see his Holy Body "poured out like water" from the spear; "the piercing of his hands and his feet;" "all his bones are out of joint;" from the racking distention of the cross; "his tongue cleaving to his jaws;" with thirst; "the lots cast for his vesture," while the staring and jeering croud "the bulls of Bashan, encompass Him, and shoot out their lips" with the very words of Prophecy in their mouth; and, to fill up the bitter cup, even the heart of the Son of God melting away in his last thrilling cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"—Can a rational being read and doubt?

a doctrine was, indeed, beyond the limits of philosophic research; and yet the

these terrestrial bodies, as prisons, or living sepulchres of the soul. So St. Paul, in his longings after immortality, says, that we "hold this treasure (viz. this knowledge of the glory of God) in earthen vessels," (*ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύουσιν*,) i. e. in bodies which inclose the soul, as the shell incloses a fish, the very expression which the Platonists used to distinguish the outward or tangible body from another more subtle and attenuated body, (the *ὄχημα ψυχῆς*,) which, they supposed, lay close around the soul, and enwrapped it like an under garment. And "in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our heavenly mansion. If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked." Hence some commentators, on this difficult passage, think that St. Paul uses the word *γυμνός*, in the Platonic sense, to denote the *dead*, and *ἐνδυσάμενοι*, to denote the *living*. But Dr. Blomfield, in his Critical Digest, is of opinion, that the Apostle knew nothing about the Platonic philosophy: and as to the meaning of *γυμνός*, he *formerly* thought, that the souls of the wicked would be *without any body at all*; but he confesses he has since changed his opinion, and believes the word *δύξις* to be understood after *γυμνός*, and to mean unfurnished with the *ἐπένδυμα*, or glo-

glimmering light of nature, though it could not *discover* the mystery, might have *prepared* the mind of the philosopher for its reception and harmony with reason, when revealed. The caterpillar becomes a butterfly, and the feathered tribes burst their shelly habitation without impairing their identity; and man himself is unconsciously undergoing, from day to day, successive changes of corporeal matter.

At least, however, for the future existence of the *soul*, whether in a separate or embodied state, the analogy of nature gave symptoms of high probability. The dissolution of the human frame rather proved the *departure* than the *destruction* of the living agent within. During the sleep of the body, the soul could range in the field of ima-

rious covering of the righteous. On this celebrated text, see an excellent practical discourse, by Dr. Arnold, Head Master of Rugby School.

gination ; and the loss of a limb, or even of sight, did not impede the operation of its faculties; in the last agony of death, the walls of partition might be tumbling down and mouldering into dust, while the spiritual inmate would oftentimes arouse herself, and, in the exercise of all her energies, seem unimpaired with the ruin around her^y.

Yet the unbelieving sect of the Sadducees, who regarded only the Pentateuch as the divine oracle, would not, perhaps, have been censured by our Lord for never *discovering* this doctrine from the expression that the Almighty was and is " the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,"

^y See Butler's Analogy, on a Future State. Abp. Whately is of opinion, that instances of mental energy, remaining in the midst of bodily decay, are but feeble proofs of the soul's independence of the body, because (the learned Prelate observes) " the cases brought forward are manifestly exceptions to the general rule." *See a note to Essay the first, p. 26, on a Future State.*

provided the question had not been long before started, and become a subject of rational investigation. But *then* indeed, when the topic was familiar to their minds, the after-revelations both of Job and the Psalmist, whose inspiration they might not believe, would yet, of necessity, strip off the veil, and light up their natural reason to accede to the *probability* of a resurrection. In somewhat the same manner as the deists of the modern world assent, with justice, to some doctrines as *agreeable to reason*, and therefore think that they must be the offspring of reason, because they are unconscious of the light which the revelation, they disbelieve, has actually thrown upon them.

But the lyre of David not only awoke to the cry of the dying Saviour, but also to the resurrection and ascension of the "Holy One." Among the acknowledged difficulties of the sixty-eighth Psalm, it is a peculiar circumstance, that the most

Prophecy of the Ascension the clearest part of the 68th Psalm.

important verse of it, prophetic of the Ascension, is remarkably clear. This festive ode is, indeed, admirably adapted to celebrate the triumphal removal of the ark to Sion, the victory over the enemies of Judah, the spoil of the vanquished, and the glory of the Shechinah arising from between the Cherubim. Nor is the style and language too glowing for the occasion. Yet the resemblance of the whole, and the harmony of each clause, attune with such accordance, with so much nobler energy and more sublime majesty, to the true antitypical Ark, whereon the glory of the Godhead rested ; to his miraculous rescue from earthly and spiritual enemies ; to his elevation “ at the right hand of God ;” and, finally, to his inestimable gifts of the Holy Ghost to all the “ true Israel ;” that it is impossible to think of the ark in this “ song of Sion,” without instantly turning our eyes to the One all-saving Ark in the

heavenly Jerusalem. The harp of David was attuned to a double chorus ; the first had died away, when a fuller and sublimer choir reawoke its kindred spirit to the ascension of the Son of God.

From the scene of the Messiah's external condition or personal appearance in the flesh, it remains for us to consider his PERSONAL CHARACTER, as predicted in the Old Testament. The Jewish law-giver, who had united in himself the threefold character of a prophet, a priest, and a king, (since he had spoken with God " face to face," had frequently exercised the priestly office, and had been endued with all the authority, though not the insignia, of royalty,) foretold of a " prophet who should be raised up LIKE UNTO HIMSELF." In conformity with that high standard, the Jews had never found *one* among all the goodly fellowship of the prophets, from Moses to Malachi, worthy of being preeminently styled " That Pro-

Personal
charac-
ter of the
Messiah
foretold.

Like
Moses.

phet." If they had wisely followed up the similitude, and confined their ideas of the Messiah's *kingly* as well as prophetic character more precisely according to the model of Moses, they would never, upon their own principles, have expected all the temporal pomp, which their own leader had not assumed. This remarkable Prophecy is an instance of a prophetic and historical type combined in the same person. Moses, the legislator of the first dispensation, was designed by God to prefigure, by the actions of his own life, the character and office of his antitype, the Divine Founder of the second. This *previous design* in the likeness was the criterion of a true type which distinguished it from any common analogy, and therefore the fulfilment of the type proves inspiration exactly the same as the completion of the Prophecy; since a type only differs from a Prophecy in the *mode* of foreshewing futurity; what

the latter foretells by means of *words*, the former prefigures by symbolic representation ^z.

In drawing a parallel between the characters of Moses and of Jesus Christ, there is a minute and striking analogy, and therefore a strong test both of the inspiration of Prophecy, and of its complete fulfilment in the person of our Lord and Saviour. Yet the extraordinary superiority of the Founder of the Gospel covenant, over the Jewish legislator, is so remarkable, that while we contemplate the comparison, we can hardly help

Parallel
and con-
trast
between
Moses
the type
and
Christ
the anti-
type.

^z The precise rules of analogy will guard against any strained and fanciful interpretations; such as the puerile exposition, that the Hebrew monarch Saul, because his name signified *death*, therefore typified the moral law, which St. Paul terms the "ministration of death;" or the heretical notion of Cardinal Belarmine, that the *bread and wine*, brought forth by Melchisedech, was a type of the mass! These two curious instances are noticed by Horne, in the second vol. of his Introduction.

drawing a contrast. So wonderfully, indeed, did He surpass that great model of Jewish perfection, that He proved HIMSELF to be the archetype, which Moses, by the Spirit, had imitated, and handed down as a faint pattern to guide the eye of posterity to the perfect lines of beauty and excellence in the original.

As a
prophet,
a priest,
and a
king.

As a prophet, He displayed the glories of the heavenly Canaan, not in dark and mysterious shadows, but in bold and living characters, and directly pointed, not to the law, which was only a "school-master," but to Himself, who was "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." His Prophecies are so numerous, that they form a distinct class; and since it would require a volume to illustrate them with any tolerable accuracy, we must be allowed here to assume in that department his completion of Prophecy. As a legislator, He enacted a new law, not for the sole benefit of a single nation,

but for all the spiritual sons of Abraham^a.

He proved the divinity of his mission ^{Mira-}by miracles of power as well as of know-
^{cles.}ledge, far above those of Moses, both in their greatness, their number, their variety, and, above all, in their *design*.

^a The obligation imposed on the whole Jewish nation to attend thrice every year at the three great feasts celebrated at Jerusalem, though admirably adapted to preserve or recover the Jews from idolatry, yet incidentally proves that the Mosaic law was *not* enacted for an extensive empire. The ambitious Mahomet saw this impediment to conquest, and therefore *wisely* ordained only a single pilgrimage to Mecca, i. e. once in each man's life. The historian, Gibbon, thus describes the awful rites performed by the Mussulman at the temple of the Caaba. "At an awful distance they cast away their garments: seven times, with hasty steps, they encircled the Caaba, and kissed the black stone; seven times they visited and adored the adjacent mountains; seven times they threw stones into the valley of Mina; and the pilgrimage was achieved by a sacrifice of sheep and camels, and the burial of their hair and nails in the consecrated ground."

All the wonders performed by Moses have, certainly, the essential criteria of true miracles, more especially with respect to the importance of their end. For *they* also were wrought to attest a mission from God^b, and for the support of a divine revelation. And there is an extraordinary similarity between the character of the benevolent class of miracles wrought by Moses, and those of our Saviour.

But, if Moses struck the rock, and

^b Warburton's hypothesis for the Divine Legation of Moses, is shortly this. The doctrine of a future state is essential to every well-regulated society under the *ordinary government* of Providence. But the Mosaic dispensation was without this support, and yet did not want it. The *omission* can be accounted for, therefore the Jews *must* have been governed by an extraordinary Providence. Dr. Graves pursues a different mode of proof, for the same end. He *first* proves the reality of the Divine legation, and *then* shews the omission in question to be the necessary result of the nature of the dispensation.

called manna from heaven, at the impatient cry of the Israelites, our Saviour miraculously fed multitudes from voluntary compassion, and frequently without any intreaty on their part; but, what is more, He invariably mingled with his miracles of power the purest lessons of the most tender and diffusive benevolence. His design went further than to tend to their bodily wants alone, for this miracle was but a preface to his grand object in feeding them with the spiritual manna—not such as “their fathers did eat, and perished in the wilderness,” but with the true Bread of heaven. To the hungry and thirsty soul “He broke his own body, and poured out rivers of living water.”

If Moses confounded the magicians, and displayed his power before Pharaoh to attest his own mission from God; the Messiah proved Himself to be more than a prophet, by the stupendous miracle of making the devils themselves to acknow-

Probable design in suffering the swine to perish.

ledge his divinity: and even in that exception to the general character of goodness in his miracles, when He allowed the swine to perish, his object was, not, perhaps, more to punish the Gadarenes, than to demonstrate the reality of the demon-stricken maniac: because his enemies would, otherwise, have gladly attributed the malady to some natural disease or phrenzy apart from the offspring of Beelzebub, since they were confessedly perplexed to *account* for the prince of the devils fighting against his own satellites. Nor do the cavillers at this miracle appear to have directed an eye of candour on its *predominant* circumstance, which clearly did not consist so much in *allowing* the devils to enter the swine, as in *forcing* them to loose their hold from the unhappy man.

If Moses, again, healed the mortal bite of the fiery serpents in the wilderness, the great Physician went about to heal the sick; “when great multitudes came

unto Him, He healed them *all*;" implying, by an example of the highest philanthropy, that it was the very essence of a good man, *to search out* for objects of pity and distress; and He not only assuaged the wounds of his sufferers, but struck at the root of every malady and evil that had entered the world from the curse upon Adam, by bruising the head of the "old serpent." This was the grand object of his mission, and He commanded therefore every son of Adam to lift up the eye of faith to Himself (the true Antitype both of Moses and the brasen serpent) for an everlasting cure. Moses was frequently obliged, from the judicial and executive nature of his office, to strike awe and obedience into his people, by making bare the arm of the Lord. But Christ refused to call down fire from heaven, since judgment was not the object of his first advent. His power was displayed rather in the greatness of the miracle itself, than in any

magnifying circumstance of terror which accompanied it. He performed, in short, those stupendous miracles, which the prophets had foretold should be the peculiar prerogative and test of the Messiah. He cured the most inveterate disease, not, as Elisha did of old, by a sign, but by the instantaneous energy of his word. And in those three cases of blindness, indeed, where he did make use of a sign, in order to connect the miracle with its end, and to give a sensible proof to the patient that He Himself was really the Physician, the extraordinary nature of the miracle was alone sufficient to establish his claims to the Messiahship. Moses indeed beheld the Lord "face to face," and his own countenance beamed with the rays of glory; but the whole body of the "Anointed of God" was transfigured with ineffable splendour: He "shone forth as the sun:" the two great representatives of the Law and the Prophets ministered,

Trans-
figura-
tion.

and Moses encircled in glory heard his own Prophecy confirmed in the Almighty words, "Hear ye Him^c."

Lastly, the arm of Moses was stretched over the sea, the elements of nature obeyed his voice, and he could annihilate the body with the stroke of death, but his power was not permitted to raise it again from the dust.

The doctrine of a resurrection was, perhaps, as yet, unripe for the carnal eye of the nation at large, and therefore only revealed to the spiritual and faithful few. Enoch had been translated to heaven; and the sepulchre of Moses was not found upon earth. Elijah was caught up in the whirlwind, Elisha reanimated the breathless

Resur-
rection
only
hinted at
in the
Old
Testa-
ment,
but
clearly
revealed
by the
Messiah.

^c Dr. Jortin has drawn a fine parallel between Moses and Christ. "Is this similitude and correspondence (says he) the effect of mere chance? Search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was." Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i.

clay, and even his dead bones, by the finger of God, rekindled the spark of life. But it was reserved for the Messiah alone, not only to call forth the dead from the tomb, but to reunite his own Spirit to his crucified body; to shake off the dominion of Satan, and to burst asunder the fetters of the grave.

Let us contrast the credentials of the Pseudo-prophet of Arabia. The impostor was challenged to produce the external evidence of his divine mission; a single miracle would suffice. Command (say his followers) a fiery blast to consume the infidel, or call down from heaven the angel Gabriel with the pen of light, and the silken volume of the immortal Koran in his hands. The prophet recedes, enwraps himself in mystery, and points to his carnal and earthly Koran as the eternal work of the Deity, and the only sign he would vouchsafe to attest his apostleship. A solitary instance is indeed urged by his disciples in behalf of his prophetic spirit;

but even that evaporates before the severe ordeal of critical investigation^d.

In the Messiah's character as a prophetic teacher, we are bound to consider how *completely* He established the whole moral law of the Mosaic dispensation, and made it the basis of his own doctrine. Our Lord, in the outset of his inimitable sermon on the Mount, proves the necessary union which exists between his own dispensation and the former one. That He came "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil."

And it is somewhat extraordinary that certain expositors should seem to characterise our Lord, as marking out some

^d Who has not read the acute sarcasm and bitter derision of Gibbon inscribed on his historical picture of Mahomet? Alas! that so fine a genius should have launched the same poisonous shaft against the pure and only true religion, against the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, and against the holy Jesus Himself! "Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou ME? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

blemishes in the moral law of Moses, rather than *correcting* the corrupt *perversions* of it, caused by the Scribes and Pharisees, and enforcing the spirit of its doctrines with greater energy by his authority.

Purity of
the Mo-
saic
code
san-
ctioned.

For in his admirable comment upon the seventh commandment, where, like a true Physician, He probes the root of the disease, and strikes directly to the heart; He could not surely mean to impugn the *precept* of Moses in this respect, as the Law expressly enjoined the “circumcision of the heart.” But He designed to enforce a moral *obedience* to this precept, and to carry it to a height in practice which it had never before attained. And He evidently alludes to the *traditional corrup-tions* which had crept into the system, and sadly weakened the force of the precept; because He does not say, ye have *read*, but “ye have *heard* that it was *said* by them of old time.” And again, in reference to the bill of divorce, He merely

And
con-
trasted
with tra-
ditions,

observes, "It hath been said." Now it had certainly not been laid down in the Mosaic code as a general law, since He elsewhere expressly defends the design and spirit of the legislator by interpreting the bill of divorce merely as a permission and exception in particular cases: and accordingly our Lord here takes occasion to direct their heart to practise the *general* rule rather than the exception. And, moreover, in relative duties, the law of Moses was exquisitely tender and benevolent; not only was all injustice and hatred positively forbidden, but acts of charity and goodness, especially towards the poor, directly enjoined. They were commanded "to open their hand wide to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow;" and duties of kindness were to extend even to *enemies*. They were "to bring back the ox or ass of their enemy, or of him who hated them." Even the brute creation was under its protection; for they were forbidden "to take the dam with the young." So that

it is easy to see how precisely the spirit and tendency of the Mosaic precepts were in accordance with our Lord's discourse. A *human* motive, to excite the tender sympathies of nature, was indeed urged, "remembering that ye also were bondsmen in the land of Egypt"—a motive far below the divine standard of the Gospel, the sublime and pathetic dictates of *Love* "for the Lord's sake." But the precepts themselves, in the abstract, were pure, comprehensive, and sublime. They were of divine growth, and finely adapted to entwine themselves around the heart.

Parables.

It is a necessary branch of this subject also to consider in what manner our Lord fulfilled Prophecy as regarded the peculiar *mode* of the Messiah's instructions. "I will open my mouth in a parable, I will declare hard sentences of old." In this point, He went far beyond

* "Haud ignara mali miseris succuriere disco."

the Jewish lawgiver; for it would be somewhat difficult to account for the omission of Moses to make use of such a clear, elegant, and truly practical method of instruction, if we did not conceive a wide distinction between the *delivery* and the *illustration* of a law. Moses simply delivered the doctrines of the law, as he received them from God, in the most appropriate form of words, used in their primary signification; leaving the illustration of them to other hands. Accordingly, we find some succeeding prophets, especially Ezekiel, adopting the parabolic mode of illustration with the utmost felicity and success. But the Christian legislator, who was also the most illustrious *expositor* of his own law, far surpassed as a teacher, in this respect, both Moses and every other prophet who had preceded him. He drew the chief materials of his parables, not from the brute creation, like the fables of anti-

quity^f, but from the probable actions of the rational world^g. He made *men* the actors on the stage of human life; or

^f Aristotle defines *παρεβολή*, or a parable, to be rather a *short illustration*, than a continued narrative of invented circumstances. He assigns the term *λόγος*, or fable, to the latter, which comes the nearest to our notion of a Scripture *parable*, and is indeed exactly similar to the parable of the "trees which made the bramble their king," related by Jotham, in Judges ix. 7. but such kinds are inferior to the Gospel parables in aptness of materials.

^g We find an example of agents in parables drawn from the vegetable world even among the Jewish writers, as in that remarkable parable related in the second book of Kings, which Jehoash the king of Israel sent, by way of bitter reproach, to Amaziah, king of Judah. "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle. THOU hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee." 2 Kings xiv. 9, 10.

when human action was not the subject of illustration, he took his images from the most familiar and beautiful objects of inanimate nature. Above all, the design of his parables was noble and sublime; to pourtray the immortality of the soul, and the reality of a future judgment. They were adapted to the genius of every age. They flowed from his lips without premeditation, and frequently sprung from an accidental question; but the predominant feature of their excellence was that universal spirit of *charity* which breathed throughout the whole, and delighted to paint human nature in its most favourable colours. He supposes only *one* out of an hundred sheep to go astray. The Lord *forgave* the servant who was in debt. The prodigal son *repented*, and was received with the yearnings of a father's heart.

Now we must observe, that our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, clothed his

precepts (as Moses did) in purely simple and appropriate terms, illustrating them sometimes by a metaphor or a simile, but not by a parable; and therefore any objection that may be alleged against the *mystery* of parables, cannot apply to that portion which contains the fundamental precepts and maxims of the Gospel. For all the classes of Gospel parables were intended, partly, as a subordinate branch of instruction, partly to reprove the spiritual pride, and to correct the enormous errors of the Scribes and Pharisees, in their perverse misapplication of Scripture-principles; and again, to foretel in prophetic allegory the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentile world to the blessings of the Gospel; but more particularly to unveil to the docile few of his disciples, who would not shut their eyes against the light, many consolatory mysteries respecting the nature of the Gospel kingdom and

its future propagation⁸. The only obscurity which can attach to a parable, is in the *misapplication* of the literal sense to the secondary sense, or definite subject-matter, which it is intended to illustrate; and this can only happen, when the moral precept, be it ever so concise, is omitted to be either *prefixed* or *subjoined*; for the literal sense cannot well

⁸ The Gospel parables may be divided into four classes. 1. Those which aimed at reproof or correcting the worldly spirit, selfishness, pride, and bigotry of the Scribes and Pharisees; such as the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, and of the unjust steward, &c. 2. Those which conveyed general lessons of wisdom; as, for example, the parable of the ten virgins, and of the talents. 3. Those which illustrated the nature and progress of the Gospel dispensation; such as the parable of the sower and the seed, and of the tares among the wheat. 4. Those which indicated the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles; under which head may be classed the several parables of the murmuring labourers in the vineyard; the wicked husbandmen; the barren fig tree; the marriage feast; and others of that description.

be misunderstood, since the expressions are drawn from the lively and beautiful objects of the visible world, run instantaneously through the senses, and strike the intellect of the dullest and most careless hearer ^b. But the misapplication of an example to personal conduct, especially when it touches one's own case, does not arise from want of perspicuity in the parable, or any failure of analogy, but from the deceit of the human heart, and its natural tendency to apply censure to others rather than to one's self: as in the prophet Nathan's beautiful and pathetic parable of the ewe-lamb; the unconscious David instantly saw the injury

^b The *three* several parts of a parable are neatly illustrated in a Latin sentence, drawn from the "Philologia Sacra" of Glassius, and quoted by Horne. He compares a parable to a *tree*, the scope or design of it being analogous to the *root*, the literal signification or outward similitude to the *bark*, and the mystical sense or exposition of it to the *sap* and *essence* which produces the fruit.

of the *literal* case, and pronounced on it a just sentence ; but (the *true* application being, at first, left to himself) his conscience fell asleep, and he never dreamed about self-conviction ; and in the same manner, also, our Lord, in one class of his parables, was enabled to reprove pharisaical bigotry and selfishness with that delicacy and caution so essential to his ministry, in order that the wily sect might not entangle him, and yet so pointed, and with so sure an aim, that they could not help knowing it was levelled against themselves, though their heart might be too callous to confess the justice of it. Seeing clearly the literal sense, they *chose* not to see the mystic sense ; or if they could not help *that*, from the luminous nature of the parable itself, they still shut their eyes against the light, and denied the truth of the application : thus blindly fulfilling Isaiah's prediction, " that seeing they should not see, and

hearing they should not understand." Not that the prophet was sent by the Spirit to *make* "the heart of the people fat, their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes." For good seed (the symbol of divine grace) had been long ago sown in their heart, but their own spiritual pride and bigotry had choked it up, and the prophet therefore (according to the usual method of using the imperative mood for the future) declared the baleful effect of being *left to themselves* when the grace of God was withdrawn: so that the parable evidently was not the *cause* of their ignorance in failing to understand the wisdom of our Saviour's lessons; for whatever *other* mode had been adopted, they would have equally stopped their ears against the truth, since it was the *subject* rather than the *mode* which distressed their spirit, and was discordant with the tone of a gross and deeply vitiated appetite. And, again, they might

have applied to Him for an explanation, (as they were accustomed to do to their Jewish doctors,) but it was glaringly evident, from their indifference, that they did not *wish* to hear it explained. To such perverse hearers as these, our Saviour, with reason, rejected to explain that other class of his parables which unfolded the mysteries of his future kingdom. The parabolic mode of instruction then, so far from enwrapping truth in obscurity of expression, was admirably adapted to paint it to the eye in the most beautiful colours of nature, and to set it off in the most agreeable and elegant dress; analogous to the transparent drapery of a picture from the fine touches of a skilful artist, which gracefully invests, without obscuring the beauty of the form.

It has been shewn above, that the moral code of Moses, *as far as it went*, was perfect. But the Messiah, as the Giver of a more glorious revelation, and the

Yet
Christ
the
preacher
of di-
viner
doc-
trines.

Preacher of diviner doctrines, unfolded additional mysteries, which the inspiration of Moses and the prophets could only shadow out and prefigure, but never clearly and distinctly reveal. He was the only legislator that ever lived, who separated his religion from all human policy¹, and who made his own agonies and death a necessary condition to render his people happy, and to seal the truth of his divine mission. He unveiled to mortal sight that stupendous mystery "which angels had desired to look into," the Incarnation of the Godhead. He thereby opened to the eye of reason (what it never *did* or *could* of itself discover) the mighty scheme of One all-sufficient expiatory sacrifice of God in the flesh, to put away the original and actual sins

¹ Hence Socrates had reason to regard all kinds of religion, in an historical view, as only so many different instruments of expediency in the hands of the politician.

of innumerable millions; to purchase, redeem, and ransom them with the price of his own blood; and to make a perfect propitiation and satisfaction to the claims of eternal justice.

The ceremonial law of Moses was imperfect^k. It was local and temporary. It was but a part of one grand whole, "a shadow of good things to come," and accordingly its abrogation was clearly predicted by Jeremiah. But the Mediator of the new covenant, in his character of a diviner priest than Moses, concentrated in his own person the substance of every sacrificial and ceremonial rite of the Jewish dispensation. The nature of his priestly office had been darkly foreshewn by the type of Melchisedek; and

And the substitute for imperfections of the ceremonial law.

^k The whole Jewish dispensation, says Dr. Ranke, in his "Institutes," was a kind of Prophecy, which had both an immediate and ultimate end; for it immediately separated the Jews from idolatry, and ultimately maintained the hope of the Messiah.

Zechariah had prophesied of "a priest upon his throne." The mystery was at length unravelled, and the mode revealed, *how* the great High Priest could at the same time become both the sacrificer and the victim. He truly answered to the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Abel, to the voluntary surrender of Isaac, and to every daily and yearly sacrifice and vicarious atonement on the Jewish altar.

Peculi-
arity of
Christ's
priest-
hood.

For He personified, 1st, the victim, the true paschal Lamb; "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world." And, 2dly, as the true High Priest, He went into the holy place, once for all, to offer up Himself, as the only efficient atonement for the sins of the whole world. If Prophecy has *not* been accomplished, how is it, that every shadow of sacrifice has really passed away, and the glory of the temple as well as the sceptre departed from Judah?

It was of the utmost importance for the

completion of typical and prophetic revelation, that the true Paschal Lamb should be without spot or blemish ; and that, as Isaiah paints the character of the Messiah, "no deceit should be in his mouth." His

Perfection of Christ's private life, the fulfilment of Prophecy.

private life, as well as his public ministry, was to endure the severest ordeal, that the most rigorous scrutiny of enemies might attest to the truth, that they found "no fault" in Him. Now Moses, though the most finished pattern of human perfection in the Old Testament, had still the particles of frailty cleaving to him, as a fallen son of Adam. "He spake unadvisedly with his lips," and was therefore excluded from leading his people into the promised land ; as if a special act of Providence had cut him off "before his eye was dim," with a view of reminding posterity, that through the divine perfection alone of his spotless Antitype, could every son of Adam

-Himself
in your
mind
and
and

It was of the utmost importance for the

enter the heavenly Canaan. His descendants, the children of Abraham, were a melancholy instance of apostacy from the precepts and example of their great Prophet. Moral purity had degenerated into a cold and formal worship. The tender plant had withered at the touch of their icy hand.

But the life of Jesus Christ was the most lovely picture of original innocence and of human nature in all its native purity and simplicity. We trace it not in a formal display of panegyric from the pen of the Evangelists, (as in the skilful touches of Xenophon and Plato, when they drew the character of the most perfect heathen sage,) but, as Paley has finely remarked, 'in a collection of incidental circumstances which form one of the strongest proofs of the simple truth of the narrators. We trace it in the devoutness of his mind, in frequent re-

treat to solitary prayer¹, in his habitual giving of thanks, in his reference of the beauties of nature to the bounty of Providence, in his addresses to his Father, and above all in his prayer for his enemies.' The bare description of such a character has, at times, melted the stony heart of modern infidelity. The false and profligate, though talented Rousseau, in one bright moment of his dismal life,

¹ Even the artful Mahomet well knew, that the spirit of any religion would evaporate without the aid of prayer. Gibbon thus pourtrays the practical creed of a Mussulman. "Prayer, fasting, and alms, are the religious duties of a Mussulman. He is encouraged to hope, that prayer will carry him half-way to God, fasting will bring him to the door of his palace, and alms will gain him admittance." But how much sublimer is the secret ejaculation of Nehemiah to the Searcher of hearts, in the presence of King Artaxerxes, when he was about to supplicate for the full restoration of the Jews. "Then the King said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I PRAYED TO THE GOD OF HEAVEN!" Nehemiah ii. 4.

drew a splendid contrast between the son of Sophroniscus and the Son of Mary. 'Yes, he confesses, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a *sage*, the life and death of Jesus were those of a *God*.' Alas! the unhappy deist! in a gleam of reason he displays the internal evidence of the Gospel, as it were, with a sunbeam, but *vice* interposes, the cloud comes over, and all again is gross darkness and despair. Yet Socrates has been placed, by the disciples of scepticism, not only in comparison with Jesus Christ, but has even been pourtrayed by *some* as an heathen type of the Messiah. But to strike at the root of so false a parallel, we need only compare the principles and motives to moral action which both the one and the other inculcated. Socrates, from an historical view of religion, regarded each mode of worship as a political institute, and therefore taught obedience to it, on the motive of submission to human laws.

Whether he only taught *others* from motives of expediency, but practised morality himself, in compliance with the dictates of his guardian genius, or an invisible monitor, or the ordinary force of conscience, it is hard to determine. But if so, the great philosopher must stand charged at least with a spirit of duplicity or error, in misleading his disciples on the most important principle of moral action. Nor let it be said, that there is need of depreciating the character of the heathen sage in order to exalt the pure and splendid pattern of Christian faith ; since to place the former on the highest pinnacle of panegyric, is the best way to shew that he was still at an immeasurable distance from heaven, and had never reached the climax of a perfect Teacher. The most brilliant feature of his praise consists in in his being a *solitary* luminary in the midst of pagan darkness and vile abomination ; and who knows, but that, on that

account, he may be encircled with more glory in the kingdom of heaven, than millions of Christians who have had opportunities of shining upon earth solely from the abundant light of inspiration? "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required^m."

King-
ship of
the Mes-
siah.

The life of Christ is both the fulfilment of Prophecy, and the brightest feature in the internal evidence of Christianity. But the Messiah was to resemble Moses not only as a prophet and a priest, but He was also to be anointed to the office of a king; and here was the rock which dashed in pieces the proud notions of the Jews. Moses had been invested with all spiritual authority as a leader and ruler over his people, and he is honoured, in the

^m The learned Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, is of opinion, that Socrates, though he evidently acknowledged one supreme Deity, did *not* therefore *reject*, as is vulgarly thought, the other gods of the Pagans.

33d chapter of Deuteronomy, with the appellation of KING. But his temporal reign was one continued scene of affliction; he was but a pilgrim in the wilderness, yet with the eye of faith he looked forward to a crown of glory in the heavenly Canaan.

The spiritual nature of the Messiah's ^{Spirituality of the} kingdom has been proved all along, in a ^{Messiah's} negative manner, by shewing, that the ^{kingdom} whole range of Prophecy never gave the ^{pre-} slightest warrant to the Jews for expecting ^{dicted,} the temporal glory of an earthly potentate. ^{and ful-} For the Prophets, one and all, mingled the gall of bitterness in the royal cup. When Isaiah was revealing "the glory of the Lord," that "every valley shall be exalted," and "all flesh shall see it together," he was immediately commanded by the Voice to cry; and what did he cry? not the fleeting splendour of a kingdom, like the transitory rays of a glittering bubble in the sun, but the awful and affecting

catastrophe of all flesh withering under the breath of Jehovah, while the eternal Word was planted, and the everlasting kingdom established.

If Isaiah, again, announced in one prophetic passage, that the Messiah should be "the Prince of Peace, and that the government should be upon his shoulders," (and even here the attributes given to his name afford internal evidence of a spiritual kingdom,) the same prophet also declares the humble and pastoral nature of his reign on earth, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:" or if Daniel, in ecstatic vision, beheld "the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," the same prophet also foretells (as well as Isaiah) the painful history of his earthly career, that "in threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself." Unless the kingdom and the glory, then, here predicted, were to

commence rather than to *end* at the Messiah's death, *how* could Daniel pronounce, without positive contradiction, that "his kingdom shall be an *everlasting* dominion;" or the prophet Micah foreshow to the Jews, that King Messiah, "the Lord, shall *reign* in mount Zion *for ever*?" But, without argument or inference, the evangelical prophet pointedly fixes the glory of the Messiah to take place *after* his crucifixion. For he expressly says, "*When* thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," (*then, and not till then,*) "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Yet the proud and worldly-minded Jews, instead of attempting to harmonize the volume of Prophecy, dwelt solely on the brighter side of the prophetic picture, and disdained to acknowledge the humble Jesus of Nazareth as their King. The multi-

tude, indeed, only a few days before his death, were struck with conviction, from seeing and hearing of his mighty works, (especially the resurrection of Lazarus,) that he must be the Messiah; and under this impression escorted him, with triumphant Hosannahs, into the gates of Jerusalem; doubtless expecting, that He would suddenly transform Himself into the King of Glory, break in pieces the Roman yoke, and take possession of the throne of David. But their disappointment, in this ambitious hope, was the immediate cause of their turning against Him in the hour of peril, and joining with the chief priests and elders in the general cry for his crucifixion. Accordingly, our Lord was remarkable for his *caution* (before his hour was come, and his doctrines fully established) in enjoining secrecy on some persons whom he had miraculously cured, lest the people,

in the wildness of enthusiasm, should have "taken him by force, and made him a King."

The disciples of scepticism have urged these few exceptions, as wanting the test of publicity, in proof of a true and authenticated miracle. But they forget or omit to dwell on the *multitude* and *variety* of the miracles *publicly* wrought by Christ, and attested even by adversaries, as his ministry on earth was drawing to a close. This discreet caution, however, was the very means which caused our Lord to appear before Pilate in his genuine character, not as a conspirator against Cæsar, but as an innocent victim, and which drew forth the attestation of his judge, "I find no fault in this man."

In perfect harmony therefore with Prophecies *apparently* contradictory to each other, our Lord did not assume the pomp and gaudy appendages of an earthly crown, because his "kingdom was not

of this world." His forerunner, the Baptist, had given every indication of such a kingdom as this; since the condition of *repentance*, which He enjoined upon all who believed and wished to become members of the approaching "kingdom of heaven," plainly prepared the way for a spiritual king and ruler of the conscience, rather than a temporal prince with the inseparable attendants of a corrupt and profligate court. Our Lord, therefore, in his Sermon on the Mount, forcibly intimated the nature of his *kingdom* from the character of his *subjects*, on whom he pronounced the divine beatitudesⁿ. "Blessed are *the poor in spirit*,

ⁿ It is worthy of remark, that our Saviour *commences* this practical discourse from the same point as all the ancient philosophers had done in their moral treatises, viz. happiness, but he at once points to a very different *conclusion*. The essence of those beatitudes, as is evident from the reasons attached to them, consists in the *ecstasies of hope* arising from a lively faith in immortal rewards. Aristotle, how-

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

And he unfolded still more in his para-

ever, begins his Ethics with analysing and discarding one after another the several modes of life which different sects had foolishly deemed the most happy; such as the life of pleasure, of gain, of honour, and even of active virtue, (since the virtuous man was still subject to sorrow and calamity;) and he sums up his treatise, certainly, with a very fine description of *contemplative happiness*, and an admonition to his disciples, to approach towards divine happiness, (*ἀθανατίζουσιν*), by the energies of the *intellect*. But, after all, an incidental remark, which he makes on the perplexity of philosophers in defining the nature of happiness, is, perhaps, the wisest in all the ten books. “Some, (says he,) conscious of their own ignorance on this point, rather view with admiration those, who assert happiness to be something of a mighty and exalted nature, superhuman, and beyond the grasp of their comprehension.” (*μήνας τι καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦς*.) For *how* could he unfold, like our Divine Teacher, the unspeakable joys of contemplating the love of God to man? or the delights arising from acts of charity and universal love “for the Lord’s sake?” or how could he tell his hearers, like the Apostle, that the afflictions of the good man would add so many more immortal gems to an eternal diadem?

bles the spiritual nature of that empire which he had designed, before time began, to found upon earth, and to make incorruptible and immortal in the heavens. Accordingly his reign on earth was this—He established the kingdom of truth in the hearts of the faithful ; gave laws, with the sanction of eternal rewards and punishments, for the whole world ; and became the anointed Head and elect precious Corner-Stone both of his visible and invisible Church.

Still the meek and lowly Jesus frequently gave irresistible evidence of his kingly power even upon earth. For the majesty of the Son of God often burst forth from amidst the clouds of darkness and adversity. After the tempter had in vain touched the chords of ambition by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world, “angels came and ministered unto Him.” The splendour of his transfiguration was insupportable ; when his hardest enemies

came up to make him a prisoner, awe-struck and electrified with his voice, they fell backward to the ground : and as his hour drew nigh, he at once acknowledged his title to the Kingship, and boldly declared before the Jewish council with the dignity of a royal and eternal Judge, " Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." For He applied to Himself the humble title of the " Son of man" (used by the prophet Daniel) only in his *human* character, in order to strike mankind with a sublime and awful sense of the immeasurable distance which separates finite matter from infinite Spirit—the visible and mortal flesh from the eternal and invisible Essence °.

° The more the soul of man reflects upon its own ideas, the nearer it approaches to some dim and shadowy conception of the Deity ; dim and shadowy indeed, since it is beyond the stretch of human intellect to abstract every idea of motion and matter,

Con-
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of Pro-
phesy
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dences
of Chris-
tianity.

Thus in considering the accomplishment of Prophecy, as far as regards the public ministry and private life of the Messiah, we cannot help noticing its intimate connection with the principal *internal* evidences of Christianity. Though Prophecy be the chief pillar of the Gospel, and strong enough to support it by its single strength, yet the sacred edifice does not rest on that alone^p. Our reason and our

of time and space, of sensation and reflection; and then to imagine a Being uncreated, from everlasting to everlasting, who is in all, and over all, and through all, existing in the energies and perfections of his own eternal attributes. The hypothesis of Locke, that the knowledge of God is attainable by ideas of reflexion, is demonstrated to be vague and futile, upon his own principles, in the fourth chapter of "Ellis's Divine Things."

^p The insidious adversaries of the Christian faith make a futile attempt to *undermine* its evidences, by teaching their pupils to examine them *separately*; and because each does not *of itself* demonstrate the truth like the proof of a Mathematical problem, to discard them one after another, instead of fairly allowing them to take a comprehensive view of each

senses are satisfied by a perpetual miracle before our eyes, whenever we contemplate the increasing growth of Christianity. But the feelings of our heart also bear witness to the saving efficacy, and therefore to the truth, of the Gospel, in proportion as we put it to the test, and *try* its pretensions to promote our happiness. Prophecy, however, is a mighty instrument, in the hand of a merciful Providence, to arrest the cool reason of the infidel, where experience has never reached his heart : and to the believer also, who has tasted the blessed first-fruits, it is a cheering ray to light up his footsteps in

and all of them in connection with each other. The fallacy is easily exposed, for the conclusion they *wish* to arrive at is as contrary to experience as if any one were to assert, that because a barrel of gunpowder, if divided into small portions, and thrown into the fire, *grain by grain*, would have but a feeble effect, the collective body therefore of these particles, when thrown in *at once*, would not give a sensible proof of prodigious strength.

the pilgrimage before him, and to make his daily prayer more ardent, “ May thy kingdom come.”

Practical
result of
the ar-
gument
from
Pro-
phesy.

But it is of the last moment to consider, not with cold and general attention, but with deep and earnest reflection, what *practical* effect on the heart of a true believer a thorough conviction of the fulfilment of Prophecy is calculated to produce.

Direct
refer-
ence of
its ef-
fects to
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indivi-
dual.

Suppose then that a man feels a conviction, (upon comparing all the Prophecies, alluded to above, with the history of Jesus Christ,) that the Son of God did really come upon earth for the express purpose of man’s redemption ; would he not think it absurd if he were asked whether he believed this truth merely as he would any common historical fact upon the attestation of credible witnesses ? as if it had no pointed reference *to himself* ? as if *his* were not one of the souls for whom the blood of Christ was shed ? The *imme-*

diate result of that conviction would surely be, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, a feeling of intense gratitude for a personal favour of such inestimable value. The believer would, at that moment, pour forth his thanks at the footstool of the throne of mercy, and humbly implore the additional aids of Divine grace, that he might be enabled to give some proofs, however faint, of his sincerity and love. The only proofs he *could* give would be those at once entreated and enjoined by his dying Redeemer—to fulfil to his utmost the *conditions* of the Gospel. Love and Gratitude would not, however, be the *only* motives at first to spur on his endeavours after holiness. For Prophecy points to Jesus Christ not only as the Redeemer, but as the *Judge* also, of the whole world. As the former character has excited his hopes, the latter will arouse his fears, and these two grand principles of human action will govern his moral and religious

Results
 of faith
 in it,
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 titude
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 Hope.

Also
 Fear,
 because
 Christ
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 as a
 Judge.

conduct in exact proportion to the *strength* of his faith. How strong then *ought* to be the faith of a true believer in Prophecy? In order to counteract the corruptions of his nature, to stem the strong tide of passion, and to grasp firmly the shield in one hand, and the sword of the Spirit in the other? If his faith be not an indwelling principle, and like a guardian angel for ever watching and arousing him to the combat, by placing heaven and hell before his eyes, the hopes of the one grow fainter, and the terrors of the other recede. Now to produce the fruits of faith, whether as regards Prophecy already accomplished or still to be fulfilled, the real Christian must believe the evidence of things *not seen* in the same degree as if he *saw* them. How would a man, then, be supposed to act, if he had really seen the "substance of things hoped for?"

Imagine it possible, for an instant, that a mortal were permitted by the Father of

Strength
of the be-
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of things
not seen.

spirits to behold some of the realities of ^{present} ~~future~~ futurity; that he could feel "in a moment, ^{that is} in the twinkling of an eye," the dissolution ^{and the} of elements, and hear the last crash of an ^{of the} expiring world; that he could see "the Son of man coming in power and glory, with the clouds of heaven," and bearing "the keys of hell and of death;" "thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him; the judgment set, and the books opened," that he could hear the voice of the Archangel and the shrill blast of the apocalyptic trumpet; (for *this was* vouchsafed, in ecstatic vision, to the favoured Daniel, and to the beloved disciple, but it was the *reward* and not the *cause* of their faith;) and suppose that he heard, on the one side, with trembling that made all his bones to shake, that terrible curse pronounced on the apostate, the murderer, the adulterer, the thief, the false-witness, the covetous man, and the

drunkard, and not only on these, but even on the less glaring yet positively guilty characters, such as the luke-warm, the malicious, the impure in thought, the petty defrauder, the uncharitable spoiler of his neighbour's fame, the prodigal or the miser, the intemperate, and, lastly, on all who had not *done good*, as well as avoided *evil*, and that, on looking to the other side, he beheld, in holy transport, the righteous and those who had turned many to righteousness ascending with their Redeemer, to "shine as the stars for ever." Now all these things *ought* to be the objects of a believer's faith on earth. But suppose yet farther, if the imagination be not too weak for such a spectacle, that the same mortal could see the realities which followed quickly upon the everlasting curse and the everlasting blessing; that he could descend alive into the pit of bottomless perdition, and view the spirits of the damned rolling in the fiery gulph;

that he could hear the wailing, and behold the undying worm and the unquenchable fire !

When he returned from this thrilling scene, how would the terrible fears, thus aroused, act upon his future conduct ? Would he not fly from the drunkard as from a dispenser of poison ? Would he not shun the adulterer, as the den of a cockatrice ? Would not the " wailing and gnashing of teeth " be for ever ringing in his ears ? But since the conviction of his own frailty would force his conscience, every day, to plead guilty before God, and thus, perchance, might drive him to despair ; suppose once more that the Almighty, in pity, allowed him to wing his flight to the mansions of the blessed ; to be caught up (like St. Paul) into the seventh heaven ; to feel unspeakable joys ; to behold the Lamb of God upon his throne ; to see and to hear the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the

noble army of martyrs, and the whole Church, "the bride of the Lamb," adoring, in immortal strains, the one great incomprehensible, almighty, everlasting Trinity ! On his return from this glorious spectacle, with what sensations would he think of the pomp of earthly vanities and the pride of human life ? " How is the gold become dim, how is the fine gold changed ! " How discordant would be the sounds of revel or the murmurings of discontent to ears which had just been listening to the harps of the seraphic choir ? Would he not strive with holy zeal to point the way to heaven, and to turn many to righteousness, but first of all to purify his own soul from every carnal thought, and to put on the marriage-garment, that he might be ready to sit down at the table of his Lord¹ ?

¹ The same train of thought, descriptive of an imaginary character supposed to have been an eyewitness of future worlds, is drawn in a very energetic and masterly style by the Rev. Charles Wolfe, whose

So strong, then, or at least ~~proportion-
ably~~, so strong ought to be the hopes
and fears of the true believer in Pro-
phesy. Yet the moral actions supposed
according to the above description, to be
performed by this imaginary character,
on the strength of his ~~visible~~ evidence,
would not be acceptable to God: because
directly contrary to the ordained mode
of bringing men to salvation. His hopes
and fears would be the effects of *sight*
rather than the fruits of *faith*. His con-
science would be forced, and his will
fettered, as long as the terrors of hell
continued to alarm him, and the hopes
of heaven to kindle his desire after holi-
ness. But even such a miracle as this,
were it vouchsafed to any one, would
not be sufficient *of itself* to secure either
constant obedience, or his best efforts to

Sermons must prove to the coldest reader how effi-
cacious the Muse may become the handmaid of
Religion.

obtain salvation. "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead." It may seem strange indeed, and almost contradictory to our senses, that the man, who had seen the realities of futurity, could ever after desire the things of this world, and view its transitory pleasures with the eyes of flesh. Yet those who have recovered from a bed of sickness, or have suddenly escaped, as it were, from the jaws of death, will bear witness to the inconceivable deceit of the human heart; those, for instance, who have felt *for a time*, that to imbibe any future taste for perishable treasures would be a moral impossibility, and yet, when temptation has stepped in, and death has seemed to linger behind, have given themselves again to the world, and to oblivion with respect to futurity.

But Jesus Christ has pointed out but one path to heaven. "Blessed are they

who have *not seen*, and yet have believed.” Now the true believer in Prophecy is this “blessed” character. For the peculiar structure of the prophetic volume is so framed by Divine Wisdom, as to leave room for doubt on gross and carnal minds, and not to *force* conviction against the tide of prejudice and passion; since even those predictions, which have received the most clear and palpable proofs of accomplishment, strike home to the minds only of the docile, the humble, and the pure in heart. To such, and such alone, they are, indeed, prophetic miracles wrought, as it were, before their eyes. Faith then, “faith working by love,” (as ^{True} the Apostle marks its energetic nature,) ^{faith} ^{worketh} ^{by love.} is the wonderful instrument by which Christ has chosen to draw us unto Himself. It implies, of necessity, the work of divine grace in the heart. For “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” The blessed Spirit

not only gives the soul a single impression, but continually renews it after the image of God, arrays it with the Christian armour to fight manfully against the "Prince of the power of the air," and lays it at length triumphantly at the feet of the Redeemer.

And
excites
hope
more
than
fear.

The elements of hope and fear do not *equally* affect the mind of the true believer. Fear will indeed have been a *preparative* to his faith, and he will continue to work out his salvation with *filial* fear and trembling. Nay, sometimes, even the terrors of hell may rush across his soul: but as he grows in grace, and prays more fervently, his thoughts will gradually ascend from hell to heaven: the agony will be over, the wailings will die upon his ear, and his imagination will rather be listening in holy rapture to the eternal Hallelujahs of sainted spirits. "Perfect love casteth out fear".

* An admirable sermon, upon this text, was

The real Christian also embraces the sacred volume as a *complete* body of evidence. He believes in Moses and the Prophets, and therefore requires not one to arise from the dead. He contemplates Prophecy, above all, as a more complicated and stupendous wonder than any single miracle performed in past ages; and as holy men of old believed, from the evidence of miracles, that every tittle of Prophecy would be accomplished, so *he* believes in the reality of former miracles, from the evidence of a prophetic miracle wrought every day before his eyes. For he views the spirit of Prophecy extending from the beginning of

lately preached before the University, by the Rev. C. Girdlestone. After analysing the several kinds of fear to which human nature is subject, he luminously dwelt upon that species of fear which springs from divine grace, teaches distrust in ourselves lest we should offend God, and is the *immediate result* of a filial love towards our heavenly Father.

time till time shall be no more ; having the salvation of a world for its *end*, dwelling on faith as the *means*, and pointing to the crucified Messiah as the *cause*. He reads of a small and well-favoured Vine, and the care taken of it by the heavenly Husbandman, who, foreknowing that some of its branches would become corrupt and fall away, caused his prophets to foretel of a Scion that should be engrafted on the faithful stock, whose branches should, in his own good time, spread over the whole earth.

He sees the same prophetic spirit holding the fate of empires in its balance, “ removing kings and setting up kings,” foreknowing and pronouncing how millions of human beings, with the freedom of their wills unshackled, shall unconsciously fulfil the grand design of their Creator. But he reads the blessed volume, at one time, as a demonstrative evidence to his reason ; at another, as the most

tender appeal to his heart. For as God has given him faculties to enjoy the pleasures and beauties of imagination, and so to bring into action some of the best feelings of his nature, as well as to refresh his intellect, he cannot forbear feeling a glow of holy transport, while the spirit of Prophecy opens her mouth in the sublimest language of poetry, teeming with all the imagery of heaven, and giving birth to the realities of a future existence.

To conclude, the true believer in Prophecy will distinguish himself from every lukewarm and nominal Christian by continually indicating from his *actions*, that his thoughts are for ever delighting to dwell upon the mystery of redemption. As a rational being, he will indeed mix with the world, and share in its innocent pleasures, because it will afford opportunities of illustrating all the relative virtues of social life. His light will thus “ shine before men,” and he will exalt his

Active
and con-
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tive hap-
piness.

own nature by indulging those pure and hallowed sympathies which arise from the sweets of friendship, when Christians go hand in hand to heaven. But it will be his highest intellectual pleasure at intervals, to abstract himself from the world; to retire, like the prophets and his blessed Master, to frequent prayer and holy meditation; and to contemplate with all the intensity of filial affection the love of God to man.

Energetic effects of dwelling on the mystery of the cross.

And as the prophets also, and all the illustrious cloud of faithful witnesses, looked *forward*, through the vista of ages, with one accord upon the cross, and hung thereon all their hopes together with the best, though imperfect, fruits of their faith; the Christian believer will look *backward* upon the same cross, and plant it as a standard in his heart, to mark allegiance to his divine Lord both in doctrine and in practice. For he will *preach*, like the great Apostle, nothing

“ save Christ Jesus, and Him crucified.”
And he will *imitate* his Master in his death, though with a faint and imperfect resemblance, by striving to crucify the corruptions of the flesh. Above all, the doctrine of the Atonement will be the life-blood of his religion, which will circulate, as it were, through every artery of his spiritual system, add strength and vigour to his daily resolutions, and make him “ press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus *.”

* Phil. iii. 14.

THE END.

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